VALLEY VOICE

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A local collective grow in Tulare County.

Tulare County Medical Marijuana Policy Requires Balancing Act

STEVE PASTIS

The Tulare County Board of Supervisors is performing a difficult balancing act in revising its medical marijuana policy. Proposed changes were discussed at a marijuana study session on October 22.

Supervisors have the duty to enforce state and federal laws, even when those laws contradict each other. California allows marijuana for medical use, but federal law prohibits it for any purpose.

"That puts you in somewhat of a conundrum because you are supposed to enforce both," said Kathleen Bales-Lange, county counsel.

A greater challenge, however, may be reaching the right balance between public safety and the needs of those who use marijuana for medical purposes, such as cancer patients. In balancing these two concerns, the study session focused more on safety issues.

"Illegal medical marijuana grow sites pose a tremendous threat to the safety and well-being of Tulare County's residents," said Board Chairman Pete Vander Poel before the session. "The board will ensure that our policies provide ample opportunity for county staff to continue to eradicate illegal marijuana."

According to the Tulare County Sheriff's Department, more than 220,000 plants have been destroyed thus far in 2013, compared to a total of 200,000 plants in 2012. During site visits in 2013, the sheriff's department has made 92 arrests and has seized 234 weapons and $524,374 in assets.

"I think people know what I think about the situation," said Supervisor Mike Ennis. "We don't allow illegal sites in my district. I'm not against smoking marijuana for medical purposes. It's the 99% that do it illegally."

"It is very, very clear this is not about keeping marijuana from patients," said Supervisor Steve Worthley, before referring to crimes documented in the material distributed with the agenda. "It is to prevent three homicides, seven home invasions and on and on and on."

Supervisor Allen Ishida said there were three marijuana-related homicides near his home. "It's a public safety issue more than anything else."

"Yes, there's a lot of concern about safety," agreed Supervisor Phil Cox. "People are getting

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Tulare County Supervisors Oppose High-Speed Rail

CATHERINE DOE

On October 29, Tulare County Supervisors approved the sending of a letter to the California High-Speed Rail Authority in support of a business that will be destroyed by one of their alignments. PFFJ, a subsidiary of Hormel Foods, will be bisected by one of the High Speed Rail's (HSR) proposed overpasses. This would render PFFJ's operation useless. The proposed overpass on Avenue 120 west of Hanford would take acreage currently used for their hog effluent plant, separating the operation from its feed mill. Hog effluent is the sewage collected from pigs and is mostly used for fertilizer.

In the letter, the Board of Supervisors requested either that the HSR alignment be moved or that the business be fully compensated. PFFJ and both Tulare and Kings counties are not advocating compensation, but would rather save the business because of the loss of jobs and future revenue of the company.

PFFJ, LLC is a hog farm that provides approximately 150,000 hogs per year to the Farmer John plant in the Los Angeles area. Originally built in the 1970s, the farm consists of 430 acres, comprising buildings and a feed mill that produces 115,000 tons of feed per year used for the hogs. It also supplies a nearby chicken farm.

PFFJ has a payroll of $1 million a year, paying $100,000 in annual property taxes. They have 43 full-time employees, with benefits, who live throughout the county, including Springville. "West

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Visalians Re-elect Three City Council Members

VALLEY VOICE STAFF

Visalia voters decided to keep their city council just the way it is.

All three incumbents up for re-election on Tuesday will keep their seats. They will continue to serve on the council with fellow council members Amy Shuklian and Bob Link, who were not up for re-election this year.

Warren Gubler led all candidates with 6,026 votes, 26.9% of the total votes cast. He was followed by Greg Collins who had 5,352 votes (23.9%), and Steve Nelsen with 5,329 votes (23.8%).

Challenger Vincent Salinas received 3,260 votes (14.5%) and Mike Brown had 2,329 votes (10.4%).

"The results were kind of what I was predicting," said Gubler. "The challengers didn't get name recognition in the absence of a traction issue. When you have low voter turnout, the results are determined by mail-in ballots." "I think the public was comfortable with the direction of the city, and I think that's why the incumbents were returned to office," said Collins, who explained why he announced before the election that this would be his last campaign. "This will make it 26 years (on city council), and I'll be 67 or 68 years old, and Dorothy and I would like to travel."

"I just want to say how humbled I am by the outpouring of support from the citizens of Visalia, and I just want to thank them," said Nelsen. "I also want to thank all the candidates for an outstanding and positive campaign, and congratulate all of them. I look forward to working with my fellow council members over the next four years."

During this election cycle, voters had ample opportunity to get to know the five candidates. The League of Women Voters and the Visalia Chamber of Commerce conducted question-and-answer forums that showed where each candidate stood on the issues and their experience. The Clay Café along with the Valley Voice hosted a meet and greet where voters could get to know each candidate personally. All five candidates showed up to the three events.

Warren Gubler

Greg Collins

Steve Nelsen

At the Tulare County Supervisors meeting on election day, Registrar of Voters Rita Woodard, handed out buttons and stickers to the board members and encouraged everyone living in an election area to vote. Twenty-nine polling places were open in Tulare County, 23 of them in Visalia.

The Tulare County Registrar of Voters started releasing election results shortly after the polls closed at 8 p.m., and a gathering at City Hall waited to see the numbers. Most of the candidates hosted election night receptions at downtown restaurants.

The Tulare County Registrar of Voters website has complete election results, along with the following disclaimer: "All election night results are unofficial. The official final results will not be available until the canvassing process is completed."

Ulmscheider Re-elected to Visalia Unified Board of Trustees

STAFF REPORTS

Two of the seven Visalia Unified School District Board of Trustees seats, for Areas 1 and 4, were contested in the election of November 5th. In Area 2, Juan Guerrero ran unopposed; similarly, in Area 3, Jim Qualls met with no opposition. In Area 4, in a battle of newcomers, John Crabtree defeated David Alviso 52% to 47%.

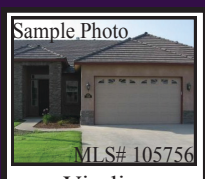
But it was Area 3 that saw the most contentious fight of the evening. Embattled incumbent Charles Ulmschneider, already under scrutiny for having this year missed four school board meetings and a joint meeting of the school board and Visalia City Council, was revealed by the Visalia Times-Delta to be currently employed 168 miles away in Stockton. Attempts by the Valley Voice to reach Ulmschneider for clarification were not returned.

Ulmschneider, who has a history of abstaining from votes despite being a stickler for routine detail, was in 2011 asked by Trustee Larry Jones to issue an apology and resign after comments about VUSD Superintendent Craig Wheaton's contract were made public. Challenger Elda Balderas, an optician and veteran of the board of Sunnyside Elementary School, ran on a platform of helping Visalia's economically disadvantaged students. The surprise of the evening was Ulmschneider 's victory over Balderas by a 15-point margin, 57% to 42%.

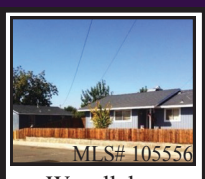
Charles Ulmschneider

Elda Balderas

Melson Showcase

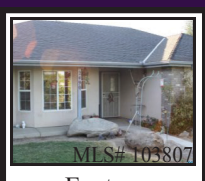


Visalia
$269,900



Woodlake
$149,900

Hanford
$149,900



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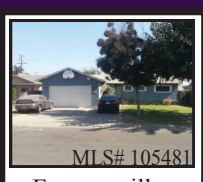

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FROM THE PUBLISHER'S DESK

The Grapes of Math

In addition to owning this newspaper, my wife and I are commercial landlords. During the course of this lengthy economic downturn we have managed, until just recently, to remain fully tenanted. But now, because of the sponginess of our recovery, we have at a single stroke lost half our tenants. This as you might imagine has been difficult, but in our case particularly so because we have five children to support-- two of them at expensive, out-of-state universities. It's a costly, long-term commitment that can't simply be suspended; indeed, what these narrowing financial straits have required is a new approach to the family budget. I admit that at first we were flummoxed. But when we considered the mess the whole country has for years been mired in, and endured, we thought: What better place than Washington to turn for inspiration?

Precisely because the times are difficult--suddenly, for us, perhaps, but not so for an apparently growing army of desperadoes--we decided that we could ill afford to skimp on security. To that end we installed a brand-new burglar alarm system complete with motion detectors and a feature that switches all the house lights on simultaneously. Yet this only highlighted the woeful insufficiency of our doors and windows, which, because we live in a house that is a hundred years old, not only rattle in the wind but are easily jimmied open. So while we hated to bid adieu to the marvelously wavy old glass, we nevertheless replaced every window on both floors with modern, dual panes. Then we turned our attention to all the ancient doorknob locks; these, obviously, had to go in favor of deadbolts throughout the house. And just to be on the safe side, in case these are defeated, we bought, because we couldn't decide on which, two different 9mm handguns for the master bedroom, one for each of our nightstands.

Unfortunately, all this outlay against our bottom line has had the effect of reducing what is left over for the support the kids feel they are entitled to. Somehow, though, we came up with a new math for them as well.

For starters, of course, each of them will receive less money from us. When I informed the kids of this--and my wife jokingly referred to it as our "sequester"-- the silence was deafening. Still, as I outlined the new budget, it became clear that some would be more amenable to change than others. The two at university, for instance, because they've worked so hard, will notice little more than a minor reduction in their beer money. The one who is employed, because she is employed, can get by on about half as much from us. This should ignite a fire for promotion in her. And speaking of inducements, the one who is desperately searching for work should find it--in a hurry, we think--if we reduce his support by three quarters. That leaves only the youngest, who still lives at home. Let's just say we've reached the debt ceiling with her allowance. Also--none of them need to eat quite so much as they're used to. There is a plague of obesity in this country that, when my wife and I were younger, wasn't so pandemic. The kids can survive on, say, one small meal daily. We see this as a win-win situation: the kids will lose weight while my wife and I save money--just enough money, I suspect, to surprise her with the snazzy red Ferrari she's had her eyes on for years now.

Sound like a plan?

Not a sound plan, perhaps, if you were to ask any of the approximately 47 million Americans who currently subsist on food stamps. On November 1, a $5 billion expansion of that program, approved by Congress in 2009 as part of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, was allowed to lapse. Forget that the U.S. Department of Agriculture estimates that every $5 spent on food stamps generates $9 in economic activity--Congress is debating further cuts. The present reduction will result in a 6% drop in benefits. And let's be clear: we are indeed talking about a handout here. But a society is best judged by how it cares for its downtrodden, not by how it projects power. The latter is more descriptive of a nation. The United States may be a great nation, but a great society-- sometimes, I wonder about that.

Oh--I nearly forgot the Ferrari: Last week the world's first stealth destroyer, the 610-foot USS Zumwalt, the first ship of its class, was launched. Originally, 32 of these craft were planned for, then $9.6 billion was budgeted for ten. Finally, this number was reduced to three, placing the cost of the Zumwalt somewhere around $3.5 billion. How many hungry Americans do you suppose that would feed?

— Joseph Oldenbourg

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Political Fix

CATHERINE DOE

SETTING IT STRAIGHT

I'd like to clear up some confusion created by the Visalia Times-Delta. On October 30th, their lead article was a perplexing mix of Rudy Mendoza running for California State Assembly District 26 and the local November 5th election. The article did make it clear Mr. Mendoza's election wasn't November 5th, but stated it was June 2014. In fact, the election is November 4, 2014. The primary is June 3, 2014 where Mr. Mendoza may or may not be one of the two top vote getters. This brings me to my next correction. The Visalia Times-Delta stated that no one opposing Mr. Mendoza has filed papers with the state. In fact, Esther Barajas filed her Statement of Intention back in June and sent out two press releases to the media officially announcing her candidacy for State Assembly District 26. When Ms. Barajas called the Visalia Times-Delta, they said the paper never received the press releases. Because we are the type of news organization that likes to help out a struggling paper, I'd like to offer to send the Visalia Times-Delta my copies of her press releases and suggest that their writing staff read the Valley Voice.

A RUBIO RE-RUN

Remember the guy who resigned his California Senate seat barely halfway through his term, and cost the taxpayers $1 million for a special election? Well he is back. Former State Senate Democrat Michael Rubio resigned just this February to spend more time with his family and to take a job with Chevron. Now, eight months later, he has filed the paperwork to run for his old seat, State Senate District 14, formally District 16. I guess family game night wasn't as fun as he thought, and Chevron rather have their guy be in the senate than keep a chair warm at their company. Maybe if he wins again he will manage to stay three years into his term. Michael Rubio's victory in 2010 was the first time he had held a statewide office. Sound familiar?

Andy Vidak won Rubio's seat in a special election in July. Mr. Vidak has filed a statement of intention to defend his seat.

RUMBLE IN THE JUNGLE – MCCARTHY AND DENHAM BOTH VIE FOR LT. GOVERNOR

Since 2010, California has a new election system called the blanket primary, or more affectionately, the Jungle Primary. That's exactly what our June 2014 primary is shaping up to be with both Kevin McCarthy and Jeff Denham filing their Statement of Intention to run for California's Lieutenant Governor. To avoid a Republican catfight between two Central Valley Congressmen, one of them is going to have to bow out of the campaign, "to spend more time with their family." A Washington insider commented, "Hard to believe any Republican congressman, especially the number three man in leadership, could think a Republican has a shot at winning statewide office in California right now." Maybe Jeff or Kevin can volunteer to run for Governor to give Republicans a better choice than what they have now.

Also running for Lt. Governor is incumbent Gavin Newsom. He beat his opponent in the 2010 election 50.12% to 39.94%. Who was his opponent? The former incumbent, Republican Abel Maldonado. Mr. Maldonado has decided to take his dismal election record and throw his hat in the ring for governor.

The two top vote getters in the June primary will go onto the November election. Whoever survives will surely be running against Lt. Governor Newsom, and will definitely lose.

Rep. Denham was first elected to the House in 2010. He was then displaced from the 19th District by redistricting and went on to win re-election in 2012 in California's10th District. Rep. Kevin McCarthy has been the majority whip of the House of Representatives since 2011. He represents California's 23rd Congressional District, which includes Three Rivers, Lemon Cove and Porterville.

THE GOVERNMENT SHUTDOWN SCORECARD

After shutting down the government for 16 days and almost driving the U. S. and world economy off a fiscal cliff, the House and Senate voted to end the ordeal October 17th. Twenty-seven Senate Republicans and 87 GOP House Representatives broke ranks and voted to end the shutdown and raise the debt ceiling. Immediately after voting, the Tea Party tagged these 114 lawmakers as RINOs (Republican In Name Only.) Many of those "RINOs" up for reelection will be targeted by the Senate Conservative Fund. This organization aggressively campaigns for ultra-conservative opponents running against any Republican that didn't stand with the Tea Party concerning the shutdown and debt ceiling.

Valley Republicans who voted to end the government shutdown were Rep. Devin Nunes of Tulare, Rep David Valadao of Hanford, and Rep. Kevin McCarthy of Bakersfield. Those voting against opening the government were Rep Jeff Denham of Turlock and Tom McClintock of Granite Bay. Both California's Senators voted to end the shutdown. Jack Lew, Secretary of the Treasury, estimated that the shutdown cost the taxpayers $23 billion. Now, federal agencies are funded through January 15th and the debt limit expires February 7th. Then we get to do it all over again!

An unexpected byproduct of the shutdown has been a higher national profile for Rep. Devin Nunes. He was livid over the shutdown and tried to keep his constituents educated about what was happening through newsletters and emails. Rep. Nunes quoted the Wall Street Journal in one of his newsletters as saying:

"Yet now even Mr. Cruz is admitting that there are limits to what Republicans can achieve when they control only one house of Congress. Maybe he's learning, or maybe his earlier accusations were, well, less than sincere.

Speaking of admissions, one of the ringleaders of the shutdown caucus conceded Wednesday that he always knew ObamaCare couldn't be defunded this year. 'Well, everybody understands that we're not going to be able to repeal this law until 2017 and that we have to win the Senate and win the White House," Michael Needham of the Heritage Action political operation told Fox News. "If the defund cause was always futile as some of us argued, why spend weeks pursuing a strategy he knew would fail?"

From the National Review he quotes: "But in recent weeks, Nunes has become one of the most vocal critics of his conservative colleagues — the same colleagues he usually relaxes within the Republican cloakroom and sits with at conference meetings. He's furious with their willingness to shut down the government without much of a strategy, and with their inclination to follow the lead of Senator Ted Cruz, rather than Speaker John Boehner. "

Rep. Nunes voted 40 times to defund Obamacare but warned his fellow Republicans against using a government shutdown as a tactic starting back in July, "I believe the best strategy is not to rely on legislative tricks, but to convince the American people that we conservatives have a responsible plan to balance the budget, reduce our debt, and reform entitlement programs that are careening toward insolvency."

A THREAT TO OUR DEMOCRACY

The Republican infighting during the government shutdown brings up an important subject – the state of our democracy. European democracies are based on a multi-party system. But we are a two-party system, so if the Republicans continue to destroy themselves from the inside out, where does that leave our democracy?

If one political party ceases to be functional, there will be no working across the aisle, compromise, or checks and balances. The party in power will no longer have to take our phone calls, respond to our letters, answer our emails or listen when we protest. Why should they if their competition is lying in a heap of ashes in the barbeque pit of politics?

The Senate Conservative Fund, a PAC dedicated to electing "true conservatives," is trying to unseat Republicans who they have deemed as insufficiently conservative. The PAC throws a prodigious amount of money behind an ultra-conservative candidate who can win the Republican primary, but will lose the general election. Rep. Pete King of New York blames this political minority for "leading the Republican Party into the Valley of Death." This minority is the reason why the Republicans will not regain the Senate, may lose the House in 2014, and don't have a chance of winning the 2016 presidential election. The tri-corned hat-wearing patriots haven't cottoned onto the fact that the problem is not that the Republican Party is "insufficiently conservative." It's that the Republican Party is becoming insufficiently powerful to make an impact on federal policy, legislation or even our country's future.

Rep. Devin Nunes has been nothing less than heroic - before, during and after the shutdown. He had the guts to tell the truth and take a stand against the destructive elements in his party. Can you imagine what would happen to the Republican Party without members like him, Sen. Mitch McConnell and Rep. Peter King? It's almost inconceivable – because once the Republican Party becomes inconsequential so does our democracy.

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Sequoia Mall

Close of Escrow Coming Soon for Sequoia Mall

CATHERINE DOE

The Sequoia Mall should be changing hands any day, but no one seems to know who the future owners will be. Escrow should close sometime between November 11th and the 15th. Few tenants there were aware that the Sequoia Mall had sold. One who did know said he has not been told whether he will be able to remain. Don Roberto's Jewelry related that, as their lease was expiring, the business was looking for a new location.

Just Between Friends, a children's and maternity consignment store, usually has its holiday sale at the former Ross, but was told not to plan on renting the location this year. According to one of the listing agents, Jon Gianulias, the new buyers would not have time to deal with a two-day event. The buyer's first priority would be a complete remodel and an aggressive recruitment of solid tenants. He indicated that while the sellers were taking a huge loss, the buyers were taking a huge risk in obtaining an old mall and trying to turn it around--especially with the new development happening further south at Packwood Creek. The original sale price of the mall was somewhere around $25 million, which most likely reduced to somewhere between $10-$14 million. The new buyers plan on using the $10 million saved to remodel the mall.

The listing agent was not directly working on the sale and could not confirm the price or say definitely what the new owners would do with Sequoia Mall. He said anything could happen.

Because the mall will have new owners, Just Between Friends has moved its Holiday Sale to Boingo's Bounce House, 7131 W. Pershing Ct. in Visalia. Sale dates are December 7th and 8th, and will also include holiday home décor, outdoor play equipment and electronics, in addition to children's and maternity items and holiday wear.

Tulare County, National Parks Launch Emergency Marketing Campaign

STEVE PASTIS

"We are happy to be back at work to welcome the American public to their national parks," said Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks Superintendent Woody Smeck following the end of last month's 16-day government shutdown.

Unfortunately, many businesses in Tulare County took a financial hit from the shutdown, especially those in Three Rivers that rely heavily on park visitors. One hotel alone reported losing $10,000 in cancelled reservations.

In response, Tulare County Supervisor Allen Ishida and Smeck pledged to work together to do the marketing necessary to reduce the impact of the shutdown on the gateway communities, said Tulare County Tourism Manager Eric Coyne.

Together, the county and the national parks started a marketing campaign with the goal of generating 300,000 hits through an ad on the Los Angeles Times website that directs online visitors to the national parks website, which lists lodging within 20 miles of Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks. The ad was scheduled to run from November 2 through 10.

This ad on the Los Angeles Times website was designed to help businesses near the national parks bounce back after the government shutdown.

"We are doing eight days, so there's a pretty good chance if you read the paper regularly, you'll see this," Coyne said.

"The national parks get millions of hits a year," he added. "The plan was to send them to local lodging. It's all targeted to Three Rivers without playing favorites.

There are also links to every local chamber of commerce, as well as to the Visalia Convention & Visitors Bureau."

The message was developed jointly with the local national parks leadership and Supervisor Allen Ishida, working with the Three Rivers business community, particularly lodging, and the Three Rivers Chamber of Commerce, Coyne said.

"The parks superintendent and county supervisors, on behalf of Sequoia and Kings National Parks and the county, wanted to get together to do something for the community," Coyne said. "They got the program all done and they got it done quickly."

They also got it done cheaply. The Times usually charges $50 per 1,000 clicks (the number of online visitors that "click" on a link and are taken to an advertiser's website), but the county was able to get a price of $9 per 1,000 clicks, according to Coyne.

"I think we wore them down," he said. "For us to be able to leverage this down, we used some contacts we developed."

Coyne praised Smeck "for finding a way to do this" within national park guidelines. "The federal rules don't allow them to advertise. They're very limited in what they can do."

What national parks can do – and in this case did – is design the ad, as well as pay the creative and technical costs. The county paid the direct advertising costs, Coyne said.

"There was kind of an emergency plan to do this in a week or so," he added. "We wanted to start on a weekend because that gets the biggest traffic and you get the biggest bang for your buck."

The ad, which alternates with other ads in the same website locations, was placed in the travel, business and world news sections. "The message was 'It's a short drive from L.A. In three hours, you can be at the parks' doorstep,'" said Coyne, who added the ad was targeted to a Southern California audience rather than to those in the Bay Area, who tend to visit Yosemite National Park instead. "We've known from going to travel shows and trade shows that our market is the L.A. area."

This marketing effort sprang out of a conversation between Tulare County Administrative Officer Jean Rousseau and Smeck before the shutdown, according to Coyne.

"They talked about the parks' desire to work with local communities to do more," he said. "They talked about long term joint marketing. Then the shutdown hit and we said, 'We are going to do it right now.'

"We knew that a strong message there was the best thing we could do to strengthen the local economy short term," Coyne explained. "We wanted to help those businesses when they needed it most."

Victory in the Valley Helps GOP Winning Streak Continue

ASSEMBLY REPUBLICAN LEADER CONNIE CONWAY

Republicans are on a winning streak. And it's one that we're determined to continue.

It began this summer, right here in the Valley, when Senator Andy Vidak's winning campaign energized Republicans all over California. Thanks to an army of volunteers from throughout the Central Valley and across the state, Republicans flexed their political muscle and helped a strong candidate win on election day.

A few weeks later, in what I hope is a preview of the next next election, legislative Republicans beat Democrats in the annual softball game.

In both instances, we showed how we can overcome long odds and achieve real victories when we stand united.

This winning momentum carried us into the annual Fall California Republican Party Convention, which was held the first weekend in October in Anaheim. As a party leader, I was proud to announce that we have restored the party's financial health. I have been working tirelessly to raise money so that we can build a war chest and restore our state by electing more conservatives to office.

Not too far from where our annual convention was held in Orange County, President Ronald Reagan once made famous remarks about the Republican Party having a "big tent." President Reagan said, "There is room in our tent for many views; indeed, the divergence of views is one of our strengths. Let no one, however, interpret this to mean compromise of basic philosophy or that we will be all things to all people for political expediency."

President Reagan's words still hold true and serve as a guiding principle as I travel across the state to find candidates who have strong ties to their communities and share values that reflect the districts they hope to represent. One example of this type of candidate is Young Kim, who is running for the Assembly in Orange County.

Young is Korean-American and is running in a district where one third of the voters are Asian. She is a long-time community leader and mother of four who waited until her youngest child turned 18 before she sought public office. At this year's Fall Convention, I was proud to join other party leaders at a press conference supporting Young's candidacy.

Assembly Republican Leader Connie Conway

Another highlight of the convention was a roundtable discussion with almost 30 Latino elected officials from across the state with more than 100 people in the audience. During this session, we heard directly from elected Latino Republicans who are in the trenches and using Republican principles to solve problems on a daily basis. The event was hosted by Grow Elect, an organization that I have worked with closely since it began two years ago, which has been successful in electing Latino candidates to public office.

To get our "big tent" ideas out there, we will need to do a much better job of harnessing technology to promote our messages of restoring our economy, providing a quality education for our children and keeping our communities safe.

The Republican National Committee has created a new role of chief technology officer and former Facebook and Google engineer Andy Barkett is serving in this position. With his Silicon Valley experience, Republicans will be able to cut the digital divide that Democrats created in the last election cycle.

The last election cycle did not give us the results we wanted and I haven't wasted a day since then to ensure one thing in 2014: Republican victory.

Riverway Sports Park Celebrates Phase III Grand Opening

Another piece of Visalia's rich history will fall into place as Riverway Sports Park celebrates the grand opening and dedication of the latest park developments with the opening of Phase III.

One of the city's most popular parks, Saturday, November 9, opens a new chapter for Riverway Sports Park. A total of eight acres, Phase III features a special events promenade, large covered arbor, additional landscaping, playground, Saputo Sports Field, restroom facility and an open grass area for seating.

Kicking off with the ribbon-cutting and dedication of Phase III at 10:30 a.m., the day includes a special moment for local athletes who are being inducted into the Pillars of Fame. Honoring Visalia's sports tradition, the Pillars of Fame is a "Hall of Fame" type monument that honors exceptional local athletes who competed in the top levels of their sport. For 2013, four local, legendary athletes will be inducted.

For more information on the Riverway Sports Park Phase III Grand Opening and Dedication, call Visalia Parks & Recreation at 713-4365, email Recreation@liveandplayvisalia.com or visit www.liveandplayvisalia.com.

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Valley Voice and Clay Cafe Host Candidate Meet and Greet

Clockwise, from top left: Warren Gubler, Michael Brown, Steve Nelsen, Greg Collins. Center: Vincent Salinas. Photographs by Alexis Maldonado.

The five candidates for three Visalia City Council seats greeted the public at the Valley Voice/Clay Café Meet and Greet on Tuesday, October 22nd. It was the last opportunity for the public, in an informal setting, to speak with the candidates before the November 5th election. Greg Collins, Michael Brown, Warren Gubler, Steve Nelsen and Vincent Salinas spent an enjoyable two hours chatting with their constituents. Tommy's, Café 225 and Henry Salazar's offered a tasty array hors d'oeurves, while Bothof's Bakery provided dessert. Mixed drinks and ice tea rounded out the evenings refreshments.

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First Spanish/English Immersion Preschool Opens in Visalia

CATHERINE DOE

Boingo's Neighborhood Academy officially opened Monday, November 4th, and is Visalia's only dual immersion Spanish/English preschool. With this type of program, the teachers will speak only Spanish to the children from 7:30 a.m. to noon. In the afternoons, the teachers will speak English. The object is complete emersion in both languages to help native Spanish and English-speaking toddlers. The core curriculum will be taught in Spanish and English, but the teachers will speak only in Spanish during the morning hours.

The goal is to enroll a healthy mix of native Spanish and English-speaking children. Right now they have five of each. The program can accommodate 36 children.

"Research shows over and over that there are huge benefits for children to learn two languages while they are young," said owner Laura Ancheta.

The preschool is designed for potty-trained two to five-year olds. The school has a variety of programs available. Children can attend all day, from 7:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m., or they can come just for preschool from 7:30 a.m. to noon. There are also two-day, three-day or five-day options available.

Boingo's Neighborhood Academy

Ancheta has a great deal of experience when it comes to kids. She is the current owner of Boingo Academy in Northeast Visalia that has an infant program, preschool and an after-school program. In operation since 2006 and currently serving 110 kids, the academy's philosophy is that educators should provide a stimulating and nurturing environment for each child's individual development.

"Our classrooms are designed with the latest in educational materials and equipment," said Ancheta.

Boingo's curriculum was built around the idea that it takes three major components to enrich a child's education: family, faculty and friends. While the new immersion academy is an extension of what Ancheta already does, it will be in a different location.

Ancheta is also the owner of Boingo's Bounce House, which is located in the same building as their first preschool. Boingo's provides the ultimate party experience for parents who don't just want to rent a bounce house in their back yard. At Boingo's, their children and their guests can bounce away in their own private Inflatable arena. They also have an indoor rock wall.

To enroll your child, call Ancheta at 553-2393 or 623-9206. The location of the new school is 2637 S. Chinowth, Visalia.

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Diabetic Drugs May Be Dangerous To Your Health

New guide sheds light on the dangers of diabetic drugs and why doctors prescribe them anyway. You could be at risk!

A free guide has just been released that reveals why current therapy may make your condition worse. If you are frustrated that your blood sugars don't budge and continue to rise despite your drugs this guide is a must have. To receive your free guide entitled "Diabetic Ignorance: How Drug Companies, The Food Industry, and some Drs. set you up for Failure" call today 1-559-627-2225 or go to www.visaliadiabetesreport.com Dr. Ruben Garcia, DC

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Marijuana

Continued from p. 1

shot at. People are getting killed."

But he made it clear after the session that he is concerned about large growers and not about those who grow for their personal medical use. "I think the board articulated very well that we aren't up in arms about mom and pops who grow their own."

Tulare County currently bans the opening of any new medical marijuana storefronts, mobile dispensaries or collective grow sites. Individual grow sites, which are considered legal based on California's Compassionate Use Act of 1996, can grow up to 99 plants. A county ordinance requires marijuana to be grown in a secure, locked and fully enclosed structure located in proper zoning.

Since the current county policy was established, there have been a number of state appellate court decisions that have redefined the right and powers of cities and counties to regulate medical marijuana operations.

Supervisors are considering four options proposed by city staff, but a majority were most closely in agreement with the option to: "Permanently extend moratorium on storefront and online/mobile dispensaries and collective grow sites; allow only individual grow sites. Establish plant limits for individual sites. Discuss option of outdoor grow sites with plant limitations, and setback requirements out of view of public areas."

"Limiting garden size will only make more sites to enforce," said Jeff Nunes, an advocate for cannabis patients' rights who often serves as a court-appointed cannabis expert witness, in his comments to the board. "A garden of 99 plants can help 16 patients. Six-thousand patients would need 36,000 plants at 99 plants per garden. There would be a need of 363 gardens.

"Courts are overburdened with medical marijuana cases due to the county's resistance of medical marijuana laws voted in by the people for the people," he added. "Suffering citizens of your districts are depending on your vote for safe access to their cannabis therapy."

He proposed the establishment of a medical marijuana committee consisting of doctors, patients, farmers, the Tulare County Resource Management Agency and law enforcement.

Roger Southfield, who also addressed the board, also supports the idea of establishing a committee that "exists to create and maintain rights for patients and citizens involving state and local city and county governments, as well as cardholders, caregivers, etc."

He plans to attend city council meetings in the county to propose ways medical marijuana patients and local governments can work together. "With regulated product comes revenue," he explained. "First and foremost, all caregivers or farmers have a defined and uniform process from day one of planting, to harvest and curing, to insure guaranteed product." He believes this would lead to the "creation of a commodity which is to be barcoded and tracked."

The board's apparent support for restricting medical marijuana patients to only being able to use what they grow received a negative response from some in the room.

"The elderly are unable to grow their own plants," Dawn Jobe, a medical cannabis patient from Porterville, told the board. "Some of them are bedridden; some of them are dying of cancer."

Nunes agreed. "It's going to make people suffer in our county because cancer and the elderly can't grow for themselves," he said.

Bales-Lange responded after the session that caregivers could do the growing. "They are permitted under state law as a caregiver to assist them," she said.

With detailed information presented about the violent crime and arrests associated with illegal marijuana grows in Tulare County, a question was raised after the session about what information supervisors were relying on to determine how much marijuana a patient needs.

"Nunes said that 99 plants would serve the needs of 16 patients," said Cox. "That will be taken into consideration. I give that credibility."

And if balancing conflicting state and federal laws, and public safety with medical needs weren't enough, supervisors are also concerned about "what other counties are doing and what is defensible in court," Cox explained. "We don't want to be the test baby in any court anywhere."

County staff is currently researching the issue. Cox estimated the discussion would resume in mid-December.

Tulare County's medical marijuana policy is only in effect in unincorporated areas of the county. Cities have the responsibility to establish their own policies.

High Speed Rail

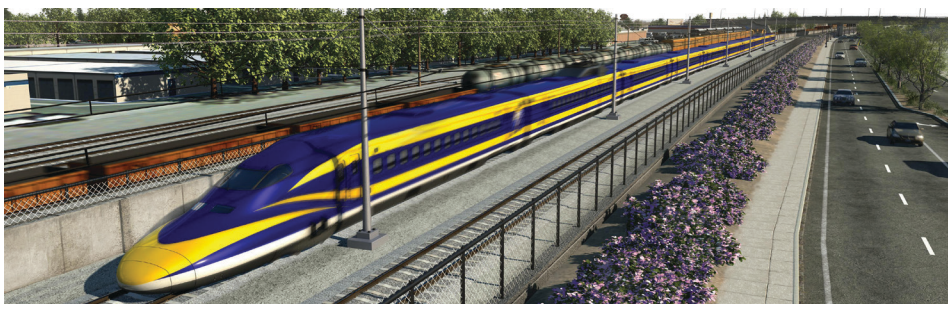
Continued from p. 1

Tulare County is where the unemployment rate is really high," said PFFJ Manager Jennifer Hanson. She voiced her preference to get rid of the overpass rather than receive compensation.

"PFFJ is a really good example of the situation going on elsewhere in the state," said Debbie Vaughn, senior administrative analyst for Tulare County. Supervisor Steve Worthley said that this is a reflection of the cost and the foolishness of this project. The HSR can't just buy the right-of-way, they have to buy businesses, and pay for relocations and future income. "It just multiplies the costs over and over throughout the state," he said.

"This is just the tip of the iceberg," said District 5 Supervisor Mike Ennis. He pointed out that, in this case, we have a business that can't just move because of all the hoops they had to jump through to get the permits for the hog effluent plant. "For me," Ennis said, "it's just a luxury we don't need at this time in California. We need water. We don't need the HSR right now but we have a governor hell-bent on building it."

State Senator Andy Vidak visited PFFJ on October 18 to launch his 'Whistle-Stop-the-High-Speed-Rail" Tour. "My visit to PFFJ makes me even more determined to stop High-Speed Rail," said Vidak. "Over the next several weeks, I plan to visit other major job creators in our Central Valley being run over by the HSR Authority."



High-Speed Rail train depicted in Fresno. (Courtesy of California High-Speed Rail Authority.)

Tulare County Supervisors have not been shy about voicing their opposition to HSR. Supervisor Allen Ishida has been the most vocal critic during meetings, calling the rail a huge waste of money. Worthley and Ennis have called it a huge boondoggle. Supervisor Ishida's main concern is our current water crisis and the water bond, which may not pass because of the cost. He feels we should not be spending all this money on Governor Brown's vanity project when the state needs to deal with other priorities. "What's more important than water?" asked Vaughn.

No Central Valley county has been more proactive in fighting the HSR than Kings County. A lawsuit is currently making its way through the courts, brought forward by three Kings County residents, who are hoping to prevent the start of construction. The Kings County Supervisors didn't even give approval for the California High-Speed Rail Authority to take soil samples. All other counties approved the right of way to conduct soil boring, including Tulare County.

On the other end of the spectrum is Fresno County, where everyone, including Mayor Ashley Swearengin, is enthusiastic about the project. In May, the Fresno Board of Supervisors unanimously voted to send a letter to the state High-Speed Rail Authority, backing the venture, despite dozens of people speaking against the project. Their reasons were mainly financial. High-speed rail will transform Fresno into a viable bedroom community for Los Angeles and San Francisco, as well as become an attractive location for innovative companies looking to move to a more affordable area.

Fresno County might be the only San Joaquin Valley County to support HSR.

There are approximately six routes, or alignments, being debated by the California High-Speed Rail Authority. Four or five years ago, the most popular route was east of Hanford. Because of the disruption of business the preference last year changed to west of Hanford. Now, because of the distance from population centers, and disturbing wetlands, east Hanford has again become the route preferred by the Authority.

One surefire way to get the California High Speed Rail Authority to change its route is to drill for oil. On November 3, it was reported by the Bakersfield Californian that, "A surge in recent oil investment near Shafter has prompted a substantial redrawing of the proposed high-speed rail project through northern Kern County." Toxic chemicals have recently been found perilously close to Shafter's water supply because of the last three years of fracking. So while the community might have contaminated water, at least they don't have to worry about a high-speed train tearing through their town!

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Exchange Students Bring the World to Tulare County

STAFF REPORTS

The World Link Inc. Student Exchange Program, an official program of the U.S. Department of State, will host its International Education Week Kick-off locally at the Visalia Mall Food Court on November 16 from noon to 3pm.

Presentations begin at noon with a variety show featuring traditional dances and songs starting at 2pm. Exchange students from 12 countries will be represented: Yemen, Pakistan, Montenegro, Russia, Ukraine, Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan.

Mayor Amy Shuklian with exchange students Gulnar Resulkulyyeva and Anastasiya Grechanova.

Information will be available about hosting an exchange student, as well as about exchange programs offered to U.S. teens through the U.S. Department of State.

"Host families are one of the most important aspects of our program," said Crissy Libby, local World Link coordinator. "Host families offer support to the student with understanding a new culture, our education system, participation in activities and so much more. In return, host families learn about a new culture, become more aware of global issues, but most importantly, gain a new family member. Host families that open their heart and home never regret the experience."

And based on what two of the exchange students here in Visalia say about their year here so far, they will also never regret the experience.

Tsiko Khomasuridze from Georgia

"I am an exchange student from the Republic of Georgia. First of all, thank you so much for this opportunity to share our experience with you. It is very interesting for me.

"Georgia is located near Russia. Georgia itself is very little but you can see many beautiful places there. My country has existed for more than 2,500 years so we have a very rich culture and traditions. That's why we have many holidays and festivals in my home country. Georgian folk dance and songs are popular in the world. We also have many unique buildings and sightseeing. Georgian people are famous for their friendly nature. We love guests so much and we always try to share our culture with them.

"About a year ago, I was interested how people were living in different countries, so I wanted to spend a year in foreign country. I participated in an exchange program and now, fortunately, I am here in the U.S. I like being here so much. It is a place where dreams come true.

"What I like most about the American culture is how people are involved in community services, especially in volunteering. After being here more than three months, I saw the importance of this kind of services and I realized that we, students, can make differences in our community and help people as well.

"One thing that surprised me was school. Schools are so different from those in Georgia. We do not change classes during periods, so at first it was challenge for me. But it does not mean that it is worse or better; it is just different.

"My future plans, first of all, is to do my best here to have a successful exchange year and after I will be back I will share all my experience with Georgian people. I will try to bring new ideas how we can make changes in our communities in my country. I want to inspire other people about this. I want to be a delegate in the future so this year and experience will definitely help me to improve my knowledge and be a successful person."

Gulnar Resulkulyyeva from Turkmenistan

"My name is Gulnar Resulkulyyeva and I am 15 years old. I was born in Russia, in the city called Krasnoyarsk, but I don't remember anything about it because I moved to Turkmenistan 13 years ago. Most of my life I lived in Turkmenistan, in a city named Turkmenabat in the Lebap region. Turkmenabat is situated on left bank of the Amudarya River in the east part of the country. There are many ethnicities in my city – Russians, Turkmens, Uzbeks, Tatars, people from whole Kazakhstan, Azerbaijan, China and other countries.

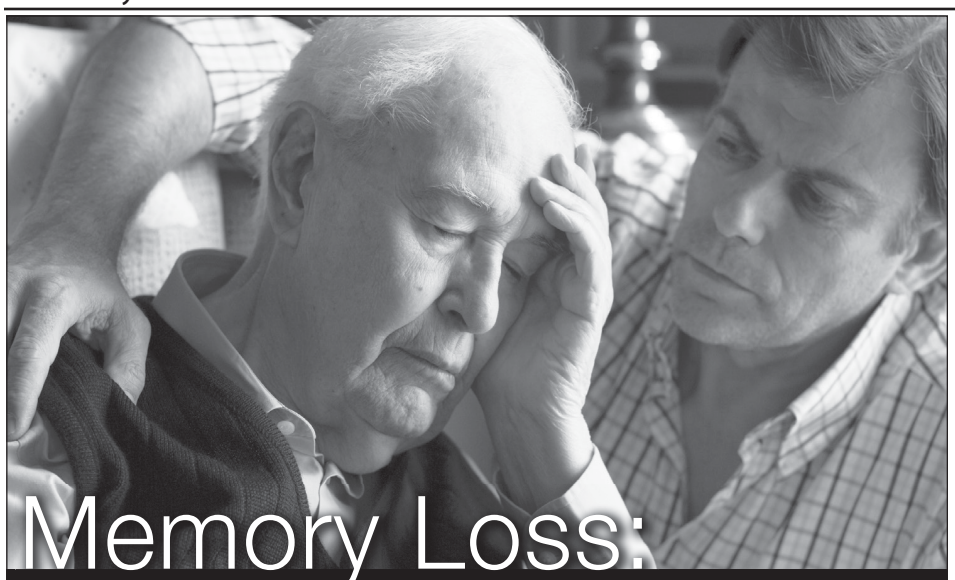
Helping out at last month's Visalia City Council Candidate Meet & Greet were (left to right: Anastasiya Grechanova from Russia, Tsiko Khomasuridze from Georgia, and Gulnar Resulkulyyeva from Turkmenistan.

"When I first came to America, I was so exited. The thing that I most love here is Americans. People here are really nice, kind, outgoing and so positive. Also I remember the first time I tried Taco Bell. Oh my gosh, it was so delicious!!! Starbucks, Walmart – I certainly will miss them, because we do not have these things in my country. But I absolutely will not miss lettuce, because the first time I tried it I called it grass!

"I want American people to know about Turkmenistan. It's really funny to listen to American students. Often they ask me, 'Is Turkmenistan in South America?' or 'Do we eat camels in my country?' or 'Do we have cookies in my country?' They make me laugh.

"Now I have great goals in my life. I really want to know English very well and become politician in the future. So I have already met a lot of people with attitudes, different moods and different cultures and traditions, and I think it is good start in my life!"

Those interested in hosting an exchange student should contact Crissy Libby at 901-0275 or crissylibby@sbcglobal.net. For more information about the program, visit www.worldlinkinc.org.



Empowering the Community Through Early Detection

Quail Park Memory Care Residences is hosting the workshop which will cover topics of normal aging of the brain, early memory loss, warning signs of Alzheimer's and Dementia and mild cognitive impairment. Marie Espinola, Director of the Alzheimer's Foundation of Central California, will be the speaker. There will be a question and answer session following the workshop.

For information on events and class schedules, contact Sequoia Cancer Center at 559-624-3200. For information regarding Quail Park Memory Care Residences, contact Sandy Hagar at 559-624-3503.

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County Sugar-Sweetened Beverage Consumption Drops

STAFF REPORTS

A new study by the California Center for Public Health Advocacy (CCPHA) and the UCLA Center for Health Policy Research shows that the overall consumption of sugar sweetened beverages (SSBs) by children in Tulare County has fallen from 54 to 49 percent.

"Limiting the consumption of SSBs, including sports and energy drinks, will help protect our children and adolescents from rising rates of obesity and early-onset diabetes and will lower the rates of children who must enter the health care system early for these health issues," said Tulare County Public Health Officer, Dr. Karen Haught.

Two Tulare County Health & Human Service programs that seek to reduce the consumption of SSBs are the Nutrition Education and Obesity Prevention (NEOP) program and the CA4Health program. Both programs seek to educate residents about the negative health impact of SSBs and provide healthy alternatives that taste good and are nutritious. The CA4Health program assists school districts to increase student access to water and decrease access to SSBs through changing school wellness policies. The NEOP program promotes access to healthy food and beverages and just one of the campaigns is the "Rethink Your Drink" effort at schools and child care centers.

According to the CCPHA, SSB consumption rates varied from county to county, but major disparities were revealed between ethnicities. The rates for adolescents who drink at least one SSB a day were 74 percent for African Americans, 73 percent of Latinos, 63 percent for Asians, and 56 percent of whites. Additionally, the CCPHA cautioned about a spike for all state counties in adolescent consumption of SSBs, including energy and sports drinks, which can lead to increased obesity and diabetes.

The CCPHA notes that nearly 40 percent of California children are overweight or obese and they state that it is vital that parents, educators, health professionals, businesses and policymakers work together to continue to identify and implement strategies to reduce SSB consumption. Tulare County HHSA encourages parents to limit the amount of SSBs that are available to their children and explore other drink choices of higher nutritional value.

This study was made possible by The California Endowment, a private statewide health foundation. More information can be found at www.publichealthadvocacy.org.

Recycle this paper

News in Brief...

PANASONIC, CORONAL MANAGEMENT ACQUIRE SOLAR PROJECTS

Panasonic Eco Solutions North America and Coronal Management, LLC acquired 16.2 megawatts of California Renewable Energy Small Tariff projects from Macquarie Capital. The portfolio consists of nine solar projects located in Tulare and Kings counties and will provide enough energy to Southern California Edison's grid to power approximately 14,500 homes annually. The projects will be built by ImMODO Energy Services Corporation and Panasonic Eco Solutions by the middle of 2014. These projects bring the total of assets jointly developed by the Coronal-Panasonic relationship to over 30 megawatts.

SMALL BUSINESS DEALS INCREASED IN SEPTEMBER

A total of 1,336 completed California small business for sale transactions in September marked an 8.4% increase over the 1,232 sales recorded the same month last year, BizBen Index reported. The company also said the year-to-date total of 11,166 deals for small and mid-sized California businesses represents the highest level of business transfers for the first three quarters in any of the last five years.

September 2013 sales by county, found at www.bizben.com/stats/stats-monthly-sep.php also show an 8% increase for Tulare County.

CANDY CANE LANE PARADE SET FOR DECEMBER 2

"The 12 Days of Christmas," the 68th Annual Candy Cane Lane Parade, sponsored by the Groppetti Automotive Family and ABC Channel 30, will be held in downtown Visalia on Monday, December 2, from 7pm to approximately 9pm – rain or shine. Parade Grand Marshall Laurie Isham will be escorted by the Goshen Mounted Police. Entry forms are available for download at www.downtownvisalia.com through November 11.

KAWEAH DELTA AWARDED ACCREDITATION FROM THE JOINT COMMISSION

Kaweah Delta Medical Center has earned The Joint Commission's Gold Seal of Approval for accreditation by demonstrating compliance with the commission's national standards for healthcare quality and safety in hospitals. The award is the result of high marks achieved by Kaweah Delta during a rigorous unannounced on-site survey last month. During the survey, a team of experts evaluated Kaweah Delta for compliance with standards of care including the needs of patients, infection prevention and control, leadership and medication management.

IRV PANKEY NAMED PERMANENT HEAD COACH OF COS GIANTS

The College of the Sequoias announced the appointment on Monday of Irv Pankey as the permanent head coach of the COS Giants football program. Pankey stepped forward late last summer following an unexpected delay in the selection process of a new coach. He did not apply for the head coach position at that time but instead offered to assume the responsibilities on an interim basis. Despite entering the year on sanction and not eligible for post-season play, the COS team, coaches and football staff have achieved a record of 6-2 as they enter the final weeks of the season.

FHCN ESTABLISHES POSTDOCTORAL DENTAL RESIDENCY PROGRAM

Family HealthCare Network (FHCN) announced a partnership with the Lutheran Medical Center Dental Program, based in Brooklyn, to establish a dental residency program at FHCN health centers. The program places dental residents in community health center sites for comprehensive general dentistry training. Residents will gain practice experience in a large group environment providing oral health care to patients while working alongside a team of general and dental specialists, hygienists and assistants, physicians and other health care professionals.

LIMONEIRA ACQUIRES 760 ACRES OF PORTERVILLE PROPERTY

Limoneira Company, a leading agribusiness with prime agricultural land and operations, real estate and water rights in California and Arizona, has completed the acquisition of approximately 760 acres of agricultural property in Porterville for $8.75 million cash. This property consists of approximately 400 acres of productive lemon orchards and 360 acres primarily utilized for cattle grazing. The acquisition includes water assets and agricultural equipment and supplies. The addition of this property brings Limoneira's owned and leased lemon holdings to over 1,000 acres in the San Joaquin Valley, total lemon acreage to approximately 3,400 acres in California and Arizona and over 10,000 acres of owned, leased or managed property in the two states.

BANK OF THE SIERRA NAMES KING AS VICE PRESIDENT

Bank of the Sierra named Dennis King as vice president, senior branch loan officer. In his new position, King will perform underwriting loan duties for the Visalia area. King was most recently employed by Mother Lode Bank in Sonora as vice president credit administrator/senior lender.

SEVERNS ELECTED CCM BOARD CHAIRMAN

Kevin Severns, Sanger citrus grower and general manager of the Orange Cove - Sanger Citrus Association, was unanimously elected to serve as 2013-2014 California Citrus Mutual (CCM) board chairman. He has served on the CCM Board since 2007, most recently as vice chairman. Additionally, Severns is a member of the Sunkist Board of Directors, vice chairman of the management committee for the industry-funded Citrus Pest and Disease Prevention Program, and former director of the Citrus Research Board.

California Citrus Mutual is a citrus producer's trade association whose 2,200 grower members comprise 75% of California's 275,000-acre, $2 billion citrus industry.

SIERRA VIEW RETAINS B. E. SMITH TO RECRUIT NEW VP

B.E. Smith has been retained to lead a national vice president, patient care services search for Sierra View District Hospital in Porterville. One of the top executive search firms in the healthcare industry, B.E. Smith has recently placed more than 900 healthcare executives into organizations. Sierra View District Hospital is a 167-bed, full-service, acute care facility.

SCHUIL AND ASSOCIATES CELEBRATES 30 YEARS

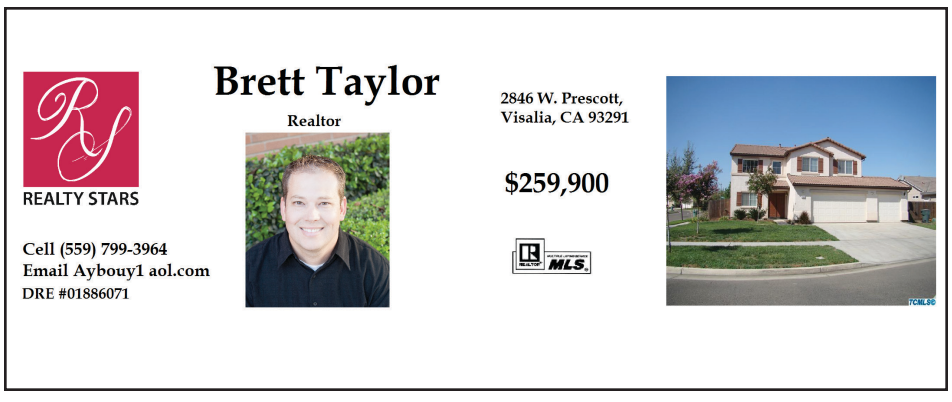
This month, Schuil and Associates, an agricultural real estate company located in Visalia, is celebrating the milestone of being in business 30 years. The company has grown to be a top dairy broker in the state and also is very active in a wide variety of other crops, ranging from tree fruit to nuts. The company is owned by three brothers who work with farmers and ranchers, helping clients reach their real estate goals.

TULARE REGIONAL MEDICAL CENTER RECEIVES AWARD

Tulare Regional Medical Center was among the hospitals recognized for Best Performance in the Reduction of Infections (Critical Care) by CALNOC, a leading provider of actionable information and research on nurse sensitive quality indicators. CALNOC's awards recognize exceptional hospitals for outstanding performance in the areas of reduction of hospital acquired pressure ulcers, injuries from falls and infections. Seventy hospitals were recognized for their commitment and dedication to nursing quality.

COBANK DONATES $5,000 TO PORTERVILLE FAIR

The Porterville Fair has received a $5,000 donation from CoBank on behalf of J. "Less" Guthrie, a member of the cooperative bank's board of directors. The contribution is part of CoBank's corporate giving program, which allows employees and board members to direct bank donations to their choice of non-profit organizations and programs. Through the program, CoBank donated more than $1.2 million last year to benefit local communities where its employees and directors live and work.



Resources for Independence Central Valley Hosts Disability Fair

KEVIN-DAT VU

On October 12 2013, Resources for Independence Central Valley (RICV), hosted the "Disability Awareness/ Breaking Barriers Fair." In collaboration with the Disability Advocacy Team (DAT), and the Disability Organizing Network (DoNet), the event was held at Recreation Park in Visalia.

There were a total of seven community organizations includingas the Visalia Fire Department, California Telephone Access Program (CTAP), and RICV, which provided important information about issues like self-advocacy, housing, and barrier-free access.

The resource fair was intended to bring community members a better understanding of various barriers that many individuals with disabilities face on a daily basis. Individuals who attended were able to experience some of these different types of barriers by going through an obstacle course, which was provided by Porterville Workshop.

Although there was not a big turnout, those who did attend expressed that they experienced a new perspective and understanding of what it is like to have a disability. People were able to take away valuable information as well. Next year, RICV will be working with the city of Visalia to ensure the success of this event.

RICV's BRIDGES Transition Program will be hosting yet another event, in early December, that prioritizes youth with disabilities, 16-25 years of age. This will be a two-day workshop focusing on job readiness that includes topics like portfolio development, the importance of interpersonal skills, job searching, networking, interview skills and accommodations.

The details of this event are TBA. If there are any questions about this event or if you would like to attend, contact Youth Services Coordinator, Suzanna Gámez at 221-2330 or sgamez@ricv.org.

VISALIA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

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Actor Danny Trejo will be the main speaker at the Tulare County Adult Drug Court commencement at the Visalia Convention Center at 7pm on November 12. The event is open to the public.

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Central Valley BBB Issues Warnings

The Central California Better Business Bureau is warning consumers who are or might be doing some early holiday traveling to safeguard their credit card information from people claiming to work for the hotel where they are staying.

The "front desk scam" is especially popular during peak travel times. The scam itself is simple. You arrive at your hotel and check in at the front desk. While checking in, you give your credit card information to the front desk clerk for all the charges that will be applied for your room.

Once you are in your room settled in, you receive a call from someone at the front desk asking for Room 260, which happens to be your room. Once they have you on the phone the person on the other end says, "This is the front desk. When checking in, we came across a problem with your credit card information." They ask you to reread your credit card number so they can verify the last three security digits on the back side of your credit card.

The caller is NOT the front desk, the caller is actually someone calling from outside of the hotel/front desk.

Most hotels will not transfer a call to a room unless the caller can supply the name that matches with the room. However, slick talkers have been known to slide past even the most attentive hotel operators, especially if they are busy at the moment.

If you ever encounter this problem on your vacation, tell the caller that you will go down to the front desk to clear up any problems. Then, go to the front desk and ask if there was a problem. If there was none, inform the manager of the hotel that someone called to scam you out of your credit card information by pretending to be a front desk clerk.

Beware of Astroturfing!

We've all looked at reviews online before dining out, making a purchase, traveling or even watching a movie. Did you ever question those reviews whether or not they were real or made up? Or how about if it was astroturfing?

If you don't know what astroturfing is, it's a term for posting fake online reviews on websites such as Google or Yelp. Your BBB serving Central California wants to make sure you are aware of a recent search on astroturfing by the New York attorney general. The New York attorney general began a year-long undercover investigation and issued a press release on September 23rd with the results. According to the press release, 19 companies have agreed to pay a total of over $350,000 in penalties for accusations of either posting fake reviews themselves or hiring reputation management companies to post for them.

The press release refers to these practices as false advertising and highlights the difference online reviews can make in a consumer's choice to do business with a company.

In the Better Business Bureau's Code of Advertising, the BBB advocates businesses using authentic customer testimonials in their advertising.

Scam Targets Real Estate Offices

Real estate offices and agents are being warned of a phishing scam that targets them. The messages are fake Better Business Bureau emails that claim the company is being investigated, and threaten legal action if the receiver does not respond with more information. However, links in the emails lead to websites that ask for detailed financial information. Some of the emails contain attachments that may include viruses or other malware.

"Better Business Bureau is frequently spoofed by scammers and other criminals, because we are a trusted source and the recipients are more likely to open the emails if they have the familiar BBB name and logo," noted Carrie A. Hurt, president and CEO of the Council of Better Business Bureaus (CBBB).

Public Health Officer Urges Vaccinations

Influenza is a respiratory infection that produces fever, chills, sore throat, muscle aches and cough lasting a week or more, and Tulare County residents are urged to get the flu vaccination.

"Receiving a flu vaccine this fall season is one of the most important things that you can do for yourself and those around you to keep you healthy," said County Health Officer Dr. Karen Haught. "There are several formulations of the vaccine available this year and the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC) does not recommend one over the other but recommends that everyone receive a vaccine."

Vaccination is the most effective means of preventing influenza. The vaccine also helps prevent you from spreading the flu to your family members, friends, and co-workers. In the case of those at high risk for complicated influenza, vaccination could be lifesaving.

According to the CDC, each year about 36,000 Americans, mostly in these high risk groups, reportedly die from flu complications. Flu is the eighth leading cause of death in the United States. Vaccination is recommended for everyone over the age of six months.

Certain groups of persons are at high risk for complicated influenza, and for them the vaccine is especially important. These groups are:

- Any person with a chronic medical condition that requires frequent medical attention. Examples include asthma, diabetes, chronic lung disease, chronic liver disease and many others.
- Pregnant women
- Any person who will have contact with an infant less than 6 months of age during the influenza season
- Children under the age of five
- Adults 55 years and older

Vaccination of health care providers is also encouraged as a means of preventing transmission of influenza from the provider to high risk patients. At this time, the vaccine is widely available in the community. For monthly flu clinic schedules, check www.tularehhsa.org under the Public Health tool bar and the TulareCountyHHSA Facebook social media page.

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The information in this report is deemed to be reliable, but cannot be guaranteed. This condition applies generally throughout the report and specifically to square footage calculations.

Are you a wartime veteran or surviving spouse?

Veterans Aid

YOU OR YOUR SURVIVING SPOUSE MAY BE ELIGIBLE FOR VETERANS AID AND ATTENDANCE BENEFITS.

Did you or a spouse serve our country during a period of war? If so, the Veterans Administration wants you to know about a little-known program that will provide **up to $2,054** per month TAX FREE to help pay for home health care, assisted living, or nursing home expenses.

Even if your duty did not include combat, your service may make you eligible.

The good news is that the surviving spouses of wartime veterans are also eligible for benefits that can pay **up to $1,113** per month for care.

For complete details and to RSVP, please call our director of community relations at (559) 624-3500.

EVENT DETAILS
THURSDAY, NOV 14 | 6:00–7:30 PM
SATURDAY, NOV 16 | 10:00–11:30 AM
Speaker:
Gilbert Fleming, VA Accredited Attorney

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EQUAL HOUSING OPPORTUNITY

Thanks Giving

WARREN GUBLER

In November, our thoughts naturally turn to family, friends and the Thanksgiving season. It's a special time when we hopefully remember to say "thank you" for our many blessings. Recently, Visalia's solid waste department received a nice "thank you" from Nasser Kadkhodaian.

Mr. Kadkhodaian telephoned the city regarding his mother, who is almost 90 and lives alone here. He related that he was visiting his mother and noticed her solid waste driver, Stan Padilla, taking her heavy garbage can out to the curb so that it could be dumped. Stan told Mr. Kadkhodaian that one day he saw Mr. Kadkhodaian's mother struggling to put her can out, so he stopped and helped her. Since then, Stan had taken it upon himself to retrieve her garbage can and pack it out if the can was not by the curb. Mr. Kadkhodaian indicated that he was so touched by this kindness that it made him cry, that someone was so nice to look out for his mother in such a thoughtful way.

I telephoned Mr. Kadkhodaian back to thank him for letting the city know of Stan's quiet service in this situation. Mr. Kadkhodaian replied that he has lived in Visalia for many years, that he loves his neighborhood, and that he is proud of his city.

We have many fine city employees who give service over and above that required of their jobs. We always enjoy hearing from people like Mr. Kadkhodaian. I might add that his mother has now applied for and qualified for free pack out service from the city. Stan was also recognized in a morning briefing and applauded for his outstanding customer service.

HOMELESS ISSUE

The city recently enacted a new ordinance prohibiting shopping carts in our parks and along our city trails. Shopping carts piled high with the belongings of the homeless have admittedly become an eyesore, and as part of this ordinance, we have required local merchants who provide shopping carts to monitor their use and to promptly retrieve them if located elsewhere around town.

However, at the same time, the city has purchased four Seatrains and donated storage containers whereby the homeless can store their belongings at no charge. These Seatrains and containers will be overseen by the Visalia Rescue Mission and the homeless will have free storage and access to their personal belongings without having to cart them around town with them. This is an attempt by the city to clean up our parks and streets, but at the same time deal compassionately with those who are less fortunate.

We recently received a report from the VRM that they sleep 100 homeless men per night. That is their capacity. About half of those are in their Next Step program, whose goal is to assist the homeless to find employment and housing. The VRM has taken approximately 92 homeless men off the streets through this program, according to Kurt Salierno of the VRM. We thank them along with the Bethlehem Center, the Salvation Army, Visalia Emergency Aid Council and the many other non-profits, churches and individuals who partner with the city to feed and care for the needs of the homeless. May I recommend that if you are approached for a handout, you refer the person to our local resources, and instead make your financial contributions to these experienced charitable organizations so that they can provide for the needs of the homeless.

BASEBALL MOVIE

By the time you read this, a short movie will have been filmed at Rawhide Stadium. This was a "promo/concept" film, about 45 minutes long, with the hope that it will get picked up and become the basis for a full-length movie. This will likely generate some good publicity for Visalia, and contribute to the local economy by way of additional hotel occupancy and restaurant meals purchased. I am told that the crew looked at other locations, but liked the feel of our local Rawhide Stadium and the cooperation that they received from our community and local ball club.

COPS AWARD

Visalia has been awarded a $375,000 COPS grant from the federal government. This will provide partial funding for three more police officers to be stationed at our local junior high schools. The city and school district will work together to come up with the funding for the balance needed to implement this program.

Happy Thanksgiving to all this holiday season!

CIF Baseball Central Championships Relocate to Visalia for 2014

STAFF REPORTS

The Central Section California Interscholastic Foundation voted in favor of moving all six high school baseball Section Championship Games to Visalia's Recreation Ballpark, home of the Visalia Rawhide Minor League ballclub, in 2014.

Historically, these championship games have been held at the school which received the highest seed. This will be the first time the Central Section CIF has taken their baseball championship games to a neutral, centrally-located venue.

"This will bring great economic impact to the city of Visalia, and we're proud to play host for these games," said Rawhide General Manager Jennifer Pendergraft, whose staff will facilitate the logistics of the games and operate the facility. "Recreation Ballpark is a beautiful facility, and this will show it off to the entire region!"

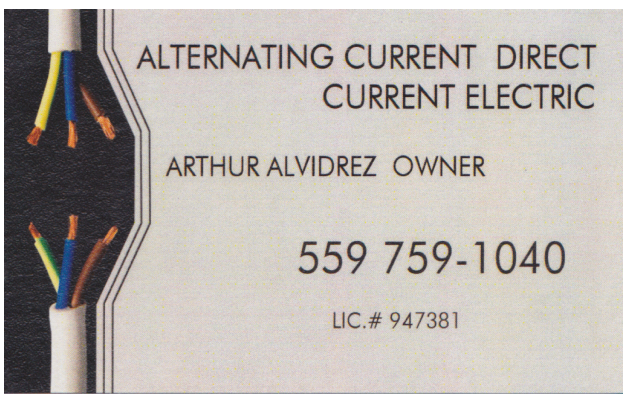
"This is what the ballclub-city partnership is all about," she added. "The city, convention and visitors bureau and Visalia Chamber of Commerce have been working hard to make Visalia known as a centrally-located sports capital of California."

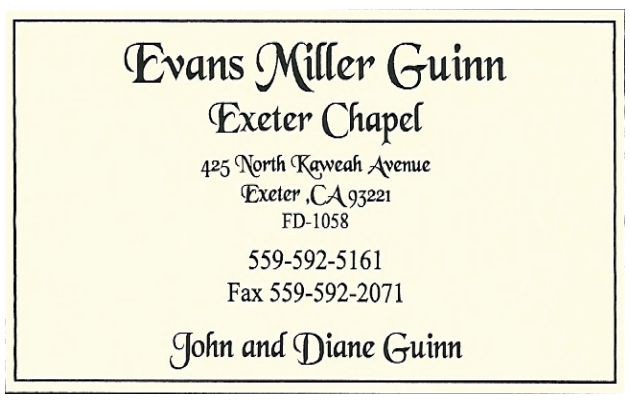
"We're excited to not only host the players, but their families and fans as well," said Visalia Convention & Visitors Bureau Manager Brittany McMahan. "We're proud to have been selected as their championship location. Visalia has a lot of potential to become the Central Valley's most sought-after sporting event location, and I think we're well on our way to becoming just that. When the CVB was first presented with this opportunity, we knew Visalia had a good chance of securing the event and we're glad Rawhide is able to host."

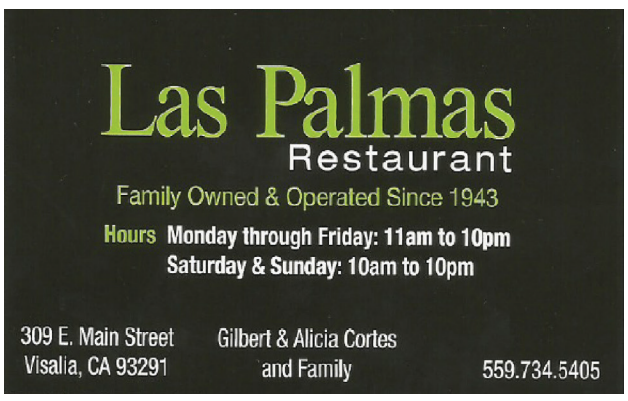
Visalia can also anticipate the welcoming of over 5,000 attendees, including players, coaches and spectators for the championships, to be held in May, 2014.

This same template has been successful for other high school sports championship games, such as basketball (held at SleepTrain Arena, Sacramento), and many other sections throughout the state.

Business Gallery







Black Tie

ALEX OLDENBOURG

Hostage to the electoral process.

Construction Industry Benefits from Housing Market

WILLIAM MENKE

The Central Valley real estate market and construction industry are closely interlinked, so there should be little surprise when construction activity in the area has picked up as real estate movement has quickened. Many new projects, and some unfinished or delayed developments, are now under construction from Delano to Chowchilla. Market conditions have allowed new homes to once again successfully compete with existing homes. The Valley economy is benefitting from a unique environment combining strong real estate sales with rising demand for new construction.

According to the Tulare Multiple Listing Service (MLS), August and September of 2013 have seen increases in the number of homes for sale as compared to the same months last year. The trend is just the opposite in the Fresno area, with their MLS showing fewer homes on the market in 2013. In both Valley areas, though, the number of days on market for homes to sell is decreasing. Additionally, sellers will be pleased to know that median sales prices have increased throughout the Central Valley from 2012 to 2013. As prices have risen, so has buyer interest in new residential construction.

Various indicators suggest a resurgence of construction as a driving force in the Central Valley economy. The number of completed building permits processed in Madera, Fresno, Kings, and Tulare counties for 2013 is trending upward as compared to 2012. Commercial and residential construction are both benefitting from this positive shift. Commercial building permits granted as of September are slightly outpacing the number granted in 2012 over the same period. Residential building permits awarded as of September of this year had already surpassed the total awarded for all of 2012 by 34.4%.

Single-family home builders are responsible for a hefty portion of the activity in the overall construction sector. Based on awarded permits for 2013, the most active national builders in the Central Valley are Lennar, Woodside Homes, and Benchmark Communities. Lennar just celebrated its grand opening for Elderberry on the Bluff in Fresno, and Vistas III in Visalia is to follow soon. Valley builders like Granville Homes, Bonadelle Neighborhoods, Wilson Homes, Wathen Castanos, and McCaffrey Homes are also pursuing permits at an encouraging rate. These strong building permit numbers associated with new construction are a pleasant departure from the abysmal permit tallies seen at the height of the recession a few years ago.

— William Menke is a Realtor with the Guarantee Real Estate Flex Office. He can be reached at William@Guarantee.com.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Tea Party Supporter Speaks Out

Just read the editorial in the latest Valley Voice. This editor has shown very clearly that this paper is not the original Valley Voice we all knew and loved. Your diatribe on the Tea Party shows your media bias and the same old thing we read in every newspaper in every town in America. I am a Tea Party Patriot and I will say to you, I have one agenda. Rein in the Federal Government and make it more responsive to its citizens. If I have to cut back and make do, then the Feds can too. As for your opinion that the Tea Party is tearing up the GOP, well maybe it's time for just that. Because the establishment GOP is nothing more than Democrat lite and we are sick of them. I will stand with Cruz and Lee because they have moral right on their side.

And, let's be honest this was not a government shutdown, when 70% of the government was still running. The House of representatives is doing what our founders intended. The Power of the Purse was given to the House for a reason. They are the most accountable to the populace because they are elected more often. If the dems really did not want to go through this debt debacle every few months, the Senate has the powers given to it by the constitution to simply stop and present a budget to the President. Unfortunately the established republicans and the established media will never tell that story. I leave you with a quote, "the press is a keyboard upon which tunes of the State can be played." — Joseph Goebbels.

Helen Pearson Souza
Tulare, Calif.

Homeless

This is a very informative earticle. My question is: How will improving the OVAL HELP the HOMELESS? They need a shelter.

You spend $555,000.00 dollars for improvements while they remain homeless.

Many of these peoplare homeless because they have lost everything and have nowhere to go.

The councilmen and others should look into what Fresno + the other cities mentioned have provided the homeless.

The homeless wander the streets because they have nowhere to go.

If they had an area where they could sleep, have meals, and get help in finding a job we would get them off the street.

They could then move out and be on their own.

Just some thoughts,

James R.
Visalia, Calif.

Fiscal Responsibility

This letter is a response to your Oct. 17 editorial and letter to the editor by Teneya Johnson. Both are one-sided, highly partisan and full of over-the-top cliches.

Indeed, as if fiscal responsibility is only a matter of regularly raising the debt ceiling. And having to negotiate "verges on treason" and "blackmail" in this "era of irresponsible budget cutting". How does "a childish minority in the House" compare to Occupy Wall Street?

So much for "speaking truth to power."

If one has a beloved co-dependent friend it is imparative to scream one into an intervention if possible.

Teneya Johnson, do you actually believe that simply "asking those who can afford it to pay their fair share" is politically "clean"?

Principalless bipartisanship has got us into this mess.

Stephen Craigler
Three Rivers, Calif.

ObamaCare's Outrageous Mandates

Less than 3% of American citizens who visited the ObamaCare website were able to actually create an account. In fact, Consumer Reports is urging Americans to "stay away;" and

More and more employers are cutting hours to avoid ObamaCare's outrageous mandates. Last year, six full-time jobs were created for every one part-time job. But this year, only one full-time job is being created for every four part-time jobs; and

ObamaCare is expected to increase the average family of four's healthcare spending by nearly $4,000 by 2016. And that's not even counting ObamaCare's $1 TRILLION in new taxes over the next decade; and

Washington, D.C.'s insider class – from Chief Justice John Roberts who signed off on this unconstitutional law to members of Congress – don't have to feel the American people's pain;

Support Senator Paul's Constitutional Amendment to stop Congress from passing legislation that doesn't apply equally to U.S. citizens, the Executive Branch, Congress and the Supreme Court.

A G Peterson

Correction

On page one of our 17 October issue, we inadvertently misplaced Steve Nelsen's name under Warren Gubler's photo.

SHARE YOUR OPINION WITH US

SEND YOUR LETTERS TO:
editor@ourvalleyvoice.com

Dunkin' Donuts Plans a Dip into Central Valley

STEVE PASTIS

"We look forward to bringing great coffee and donuts to the Central Valley," said Steve Rafferty, senior director of franchising for Dunkin' Brands, whose company is

looking to open restaurants here, as well as throughout Southern California.

According to an October 15th press release that announced Dunkin' Donuts' planned expansion into California, "The company is recruiting qualified multi-unit operators to open both traditional restaurants and a wide range of non-traditional venues, including colleges and universities, casinos, military bases, supermarkets, airports and travel centers. Over time, Dunkin' Donuts plans to have as many as 1,000 restaurants throughout the state."

Dunkin' Donuts locations are typically freestanding restaurants with a size of 2,000 to 2,400 square feet, Rafferty told the Voice.

"The highest volume locations are typically in a free-standing location with a drive-through, parking and inside seating," he said. "Typically, it's the location where you're getting your first cup of coffee, so it's near a residential center."

He added that not every Valley location will be in a building constructed to be a Dunkin' Donuts restaurant.

"In the Central Valley, we know we're one of the last ones in," said Rafferty. "We think we'll see a mix of restaurants that they will build from the ground up, or they will take over an existing building."

Coming to a street near you in the near future – Dunkin' Donuts.

The company has no rules about how many Dunkin' Donuts franchises can open in Visalia or Tulare County, according to Rafferty. "Ultimately, our customers will tell us what the right number of locations is. Our initial commitment is five to 10 Dunkin' Donuts restaurants. We expect to build more over time."

So why aren't there Dunkin' Donuts restaurants in the Central Valley already?

"We need to provide the right level of support for our franchises, a supply chain that is easily accessible to our franchisees," Rafferty responded. "We're ready now to supply that support."

That support is currently through a central distribution center in Phoenix, he added. "In time, it will be in California."

Rafferty described the type of person who proves to be the most successful Dunkin' Donuts franchise owner as "someone who has operated a business like ours, a quick service restaurant. We'd like somebody experienced in running multi-unit restaurants, a small chain of restaurants like ours – but not competing with ours."

Foodservice, operations and real estate experience is required for all franchisee candidates, according to the October 15th release.

Dunkin' Donuts restaurants serve "a full range of baked goods – bagels, croissants and all sorts of baked items including cookies," Rafferty said. They also serve breakfast specialties, such as bacon, egg and cheese on an English muffin, an assortment of sandwiches, and beverages.

"People think of us first for coffee but we also have iced coffee, iced tea and iced Coolatta," he added, describing a Coolatta as a fruit-flavored drink similar to an Icee.

A typical Dunkin' Donuts restaurant employs about 25 people, some part-time and others full-time, according to Rafferty. Usually, there is a general manager and two assistants, and the crew includes those who take care of customers and others who prepare fresh coffee and donuts.

Rafferty estimates that the first Dunkin' Donuts restaurant in the Central Valley could open its doors as early as 2015. Currently, the only Dunkin' Donuts restaurant in California is at Camp Pendleton, near San Diego. The second one is expected to open at Barstow Station, along the highway between Los Angeles and Las Vegas, later this year.

From left to right: Mary T. Hill, Terry Culotta, Blayne Hammond

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Lyle Lovett and John Hiatt

Lyle Lovett and John Hiatt to Share Fox Hanford Stage

The Fox Hanford Theatre will host a performance by Lyle Lovett and John Hiatt on Wednesday, November 13, 2013 at 8pm.

Singer, composer, and actor Lyle Lovett has broadened the definition of American music in a career that spans 14 albums. Since his self-titled debut in 1986, Lovett has evolved into one of music's most vibrant and iconic performers. Among his many accolades are four Grammy Awards, the Americana Music Association's inaugural Trailblazer Award, and the title of Texas State Musician. Coupled with his gift for storytelling, the Texas-based musician fuses elements of country, swing, jazz, folk, gospel and blues in a convention-defying manner that breaks down barriers.

Over 35 years after the release of his debut album, John Hiatt remains one of America's most respected and influential singer-songwriters. His songs have been covered by artists as diverse as Bob Dylan, Bonnie Raitt, Buddy Guy, Emmylou Harris, Iggy Pop, Rosanne Cash (the #1 country hit "The Way We Make A Broken Heart"), the Jeff Healey Band ("Angel Eyes") and Willie Nelson. In the past few years alone, Hiatt has been honored with his own star on Nashville's

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Symphony Concert Features Opera and a Popular Violinist's Return

DONNA OROZCO

The Tulare County Symphony and its music director, Bruce Kiesling, are always ready to try something new with their concerts. The November 23 concert will feature the "greatest hits of opera" performed by four singers, along with a return engagement of a symphony favorite, Armenian violinist Haik Kazazyan.

As Kiesling told students attending the recent youth concerts in Visalia, Tulare and Porterville – which also featured opera pieces – over 100 years ago, opera was the popular entertainment of the day. Kiesling is a master at giving background for the pieces played by the symphony, and he will set the scene for the selections.

The concert is a tribute to Edna Garabedian, a former leading opera singer with companies throughout the world and founder of the California Opera Association, and will feature her current and former student singers.

Two of the most fun pieces are from "The Barber of Seville." "Largo al Factotum" is an aria sung by the character Figaro. It is the piece most people are familiar with where he sings, "Figaro, Figaro, Figaro" while talking about all the ways that people use his services and are always calling on him to carry secret messages to their lovers.

Also from "The Barber of Seville" is "Una Voce Poco Fa," sung by the young Rosina in the opera. She describes herself as a very pliable,

Haik Kazazyan

obedient and respectful girl – until she is crossed. Then she is a viper.

Another clever song is "Adele's Laughing Aria" from "De Fledermaus" ("The Bat") in which the soprano laughs throughout the entire song, saying no she is certainly not a maid (although she really is).

Kazazyan has performed with the symphony several times and is always a hit. He was specifically requested by the anonymous sponsor of the concert. He has won numerous international violin competitions. He will perform the "Carmen Fantasy" from "Carmen" and Saint-Saens' "Introduction and Rondo Capriccioso."

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Annual Christmas Tree Auction Set for December 6

Generosity and grandeur will once again join forces when the Visalia Chamber of Commerce presents "The Giving Tree," the 33rd Annual Christmas Tree Auction on Friday, December 6, at the Visalia Convention Center.

Hosted by the Visalia Chamber of Commerce, the Christmas Tree Auction has become a local holiday tradition. Each year, more than 900 people dress up in their finest clothes and kick off the holiday season in a giving spirit. The Christmas Tree Auction is the only public formal event in the city, and includes gourmet food, dancing, entertainment and wine tasting.

The focus of this event is to raise awareness and donations for the local non-profit organizations in the city of Visalia. More than $4 million has been raised for local charities in the last 32 years. Last year's event brought in nearly $300,000 in donations, underscoring the significance of this annual event, and its impact on the budgets of local non-profit organizations.

This year attendees have the choice to attend the Christmas Tree Auction on a general admission ticket or as VIP Guest. General admission includes: wine tasting, hors d'oeuvres, silent auction, dessert and dancing. The VIP ticket includes: a sit down dinner, live Christmas Tree Auction, wine tasting, hors d'oeuvres, silent auction, dessert and dancing. General admission tickets are $60 (7:30-11:30 p.m.) while VIP tickets are $125 (5:30-11:30 p.m.).

Volunteers are preparing to decorate more than 14 live Christmas trees to be auctioned off, as well as silent auction items for the benefit of the following local charities: Assistance League Visalia, Battered Women's Shelter, CASA Tulare County, CLIPArts (Christ Lutheran Institue of Performing Arts), Daughters of Hope, El Diamante High School,

Continued on p. 23»

Meat Puppets to Perform at Cellar Door on November 10

STEVE PASTIS

Curt Kirkwood, lead singer, guitar player and songwriter for the Meat Puppets, was at a loss to explain his band's continued popularity and influence. Since forming in 1980, the band has gone through a series of dramatic musical changes – and even more dramatic breakups.

"I don't really know," he said. "I think we're just lucky."

The Meat Puppets, who will headline a 7pm show at The Cellar Door on Sunday, November 10, started as a punk band before blending country and psychedelic rock into their sound. The band's changing sound seems to be the main constant.

"I never know what I'm going to be into," Kirkwood told the *Voice*. "I'm pretty easily influenced. I'll see a movie or take a drive. I'm always waiting to see what sparks my interest."

Kirkwood was modest about the Meat Puppets' influence on other bands. "I have to take other people's word for it," he said. "I'm mostly just a music player. I'm just a musician myself."

After seeing the Meat Puppets open a Black Flag concert in 1993, Kurt Cobain of Nirvana wanted to play Kirkwood's music during his "MTV Unplugged" performance. He invited Kirkwood and other band members to accompany him on the show. "That was his idea, Kirkwood said. "He wanted to play our songs and he wanted us to play along.

Meat Puppets

"Then I got to be friends with him – to a degree," Kirkwood said, describing his relationship with Cobain as more of a working one.

"MTV Unplugged in New York," the album that resulted from the performance, became Nirvana's swan song. Cobain died a few months later.

Kirkwood said the drug and

Continued on p. 24»

A company of 40 performs Olympic-worthy leaps, lifts and lunges in each show.

Moscow Ballet's 'Great Russian Nutcracker' Comes to Fox Hanford

Moscow Ballet's "Great Russian Nutcracker" will bring holiday spirit and Russian tradition to life on the stage of the Hanford Fox Theatre at a 3pm performance on Sunday, November 10.

The acclaimed and award-winning dancers will perform Olympic-worthy leaps, lifts and lunges in the traditional holiday story. Exclusive to Moscow Ballet's Great Russian Nutcracker, is a tribute to world peace in the character of the "Dove of Peace." Two dancers become one dove with a 20-foot wingspan, which escorts Masha and Nutcracker Prince to the "Land of Peace and Harmony" (instead of usual "Land of Sweets").

In addition to the large company of highly trained dancers, the production features time-honored Russian production values: nine backdrops hand-painted with intricate detail, 3-D effects and reference to Russian culture by Valentin Federov; 200 new costumes created in St Petersburg's oldest theatrical costume shop, hand-embellished with Swarovski crystals, and designed by Shakespearean expert Arthur Oliver; and Russian folk legends Ded Moroz (Father Christmas) with Snegurochka (Snow Maiden) leading Masha and Prince to the "Land of Peace and Harmony."

Moscow Ballet's Christmas story will create holiday memories for audiences from New York City to Los Angeles, Chicago to Dallas and 74 more cities on its current tour.

Tickets are $27.50, $37.50, $48 $68 $102 and $175, For tickets or more information, visit www.foxhanford.com or call 584-7823.

The Best Menudo is in Tulare

Event organizer Raymond Macareno (right) hands the prize for Best Menudo in Tulare County to Mike Vejar of Mikey V's Cafe.

On October 20, the Tulare County League of Mexican American Women, in association with Nuestro Tiempo Magazine, hosted the inaugural Menudo Cook-Off at Recreation Park in Visalia. Attendees of the event had the opportunity to taste menudo and to vote for their favorite.

"The event was a complete success – actually, a little too successful," said event organizer Raymond Macareno. "We planned for 500 and had over 1,000 people in attendance. The event sold out in two hours and we had to turn away those that wanted to participate, and unfortunately a majority of menudo booths were out within two hours."

The title of the best menudo in Tulare County was awarded to Mikey V's Café in Tulare; second place wnt to Taqueria Ana Maria's in Farmersville; and third place to Taqueria El Mejor in Visalia.

Comedian Paul Rodriguez Comes to Visalia

"Original Latin King of Comedy" comedian and actor Paul Rodriguez is set to perform a "Night of Laughter" at the Visalia Convention Center on Friday, November 15.

Rodriguez has been delivering jokes for decades, and although he draws on current events, his own life and his family for his material that he updates periodically, his philosophy on humor has remained the same through the years.

"Comedy is a give and take," Rodriquez said, adding he's always happy to supply his own brand of humor to make people laugh.

"People (my fans) are happy I've been at it so long," said Rodriguez, who has also appeared in various movies, on television shows and comedy specials through the years.

While he enjoys coming up with new material, he said it's the older material fans are sometimes most excited about. "People want to hear the old routines. Sometimes they don't want surprises. But you have to stay on your toes," he said.

Rodriguez, who has always worked clean, said it's important to him to keep his material in that vein. "That way you appeal to a broader base. Live shows can draw grandma, mom and kids," he said.

With his humor, Rodriquez said, the key to a successful joke is to "not get too far away from the truth....the truth is what's funny."

Paul Rodriguez

Rodriguez is known for appearances in such films as "D.C. Cab," "Born in East L.A.," "Tortilla Soup," "Rat Race" and "Ali." He will be appearing with Sarah Silverman and Gabourey Sidibe in the upcoming horror film "Gravy," due out December 12.

Tickets can be reserved by visiting the Visalia Convention Center Ticket Office or by calling 713-4040. Tickets start at $25, with reserved seating at $35.

Celtic/Folk/World Music Duo to Perform Two Local Concerts

The Celtic/folk/world music duo Four Shillings Short will present a free multi-cultural educational concert for all ages called "Around the World in 30 Instruments" on November 8 at the Visalia Public Library.

This family-friendly show features a wide array of instruments including hammered and mountain dulcimer, mandolin, mandola, bouzouki, tinwhistles, recorders, medieval and renaissance woodwinds, North Indian sitar, charango, bowed psaltery, banjo, bodhran, guitar, percussion and even a krumhorn. This fun and informative program includes traditional music from Ireland and Scotland, India, medieval and renaissance Europe and the Americas.

On November 9, the duo will present an evening of music to celebrate the Samhain, the Celtic New Year and Harvest Season, at River Ridge Ranch in Springville.

Celebrating their 18th year together, the husband/wife duo tour in the U.S. and Ireland, are independent folk-artists with 10 recordings, perform 150 concerts a year and live as full time troubadours traveling from town to town performing at music festivals, theatres and performing arts centers, folk societies, libraries, house concerts and schools.

Aodh Og O'Tuama grew up in a family of poets, musicians and writers. He received his degree in music from University College Cork, Ireland, and received a Fellowship from Stanford University in medieval and renaissance performance.

Christy Martin grew up in a family of musicians and dancers. From the age of 15, she studied North Indian sitar for 10 years, five of them with a student of master sitarist Ravi Shankar. She began playing the hammered dulcimer in her 20's and has studied with Maggie Sansone, Dan Duggan, Cliff Moses, Robin Petrie, Tony Elman and Glen Morgan.

Four Shillings Short

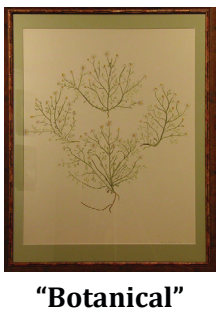
For more information, call the Visalia Public Library at 713-2700, or River Ridge Ranch at 539-0207.

"Christmas at the Gallery" Reception

Oil painting
24"X 36" framed
by Marty Weekly

Saturday December 14th, 2013
from 4:30 pm

Exeter Courthouse Gallery of the Arts & Museum
125 South B Street, Exeter



"Botanical"
30"x 40"watercolor framed
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Mary Roberts Dungan
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Sunday, November 17th, 2013

All This For Only $59.95 Reserved In Advance Paid Reservations Need To Be Placed On Or Before November 10th, 2013 To Reserve Your Main Lobster

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YES, I Will Be Attending The Maine Lobster Fest On November 17th, 2013, And Want To Reserve The Following Dinners:

Number of Dinners To Reserve: _____
NAME:_____
TEL NO:_____
EMAIL_____

Tulare Historical Museum Presents 'Art for the Holidays'

Main Gallery Artists will display their artwork at "Art for the Holidays" at the Tulare Historical Museum from November 8 through January 4.

The exhibition features a variety of artists and media, including acrylic, oil, watercolor, photography, mixed media, ceramics, stained glass, gourds and baskets.

Artists include Betty Berk, Toni Best, Jeri Burzin, Deb Cook, Elsah Cort, Lonni Flowers, Laurie Gorman, Linda Hengst, Moni Mauch, Deb Nolan, Deanna Saldana, John Sundstrom, Sherley Tucker and Ginny Wilson. An artists' reception will be held on Friday, November 8, from 5-7 p.m.

"Art for the Holidays" features art by Deanna Saldana

Main Gallery Artists is a virtual art gallery and mobile group of well-known local artists. The artists exhibit their work together, provide unique art as gifts, and help organizations promote their missions with art activities such as art shows, exhibits, fundraisers, art workshops and much more.

The museum is located at 444 W. Tulare Ave., Tulare, and is open from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Thursday through Saturday. In addition to its regular hours, the museum is open the third Sunday of the month for free from 12:30 to 4 p.m., during the months of September to May. Admission is $5 for adults, $3 for seniors (55+) and Southern California Automobile Club members, $2 for students, and free for Tulare City Historical Society members and children under 5 years old.

For more information, call 686-2074.

Holiday Marketplace Boutique Set for November 16-17

Central Valley W.O.M.E.N.'S Network (CVWN) will host its 4th Annual Holiday Marketplace Boutique at the Visalia Convention Center on Saturday, November 16, from 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. and Sunday, November 17, from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m.

The event features a variety of booths for the whole family, a silent auction with all items donated by CVWN members, raffle prizes and free door prize drawings. Valley Oak SPCA will be in front of the Convention Center for those interested in adopting a pet.

Admission is $2, and current military and their immediate families are admitted free. Proceeds from this event benefit the CVWN Scholarship Fund and Relay for Life.

CVWN is a group of women who own home-based businesses.

Chamber Music Series Opens November 17

BILL HAXTON

Four of North America's top young classical musicians will perform the "Best of Colburn" at the Main Street Theatre on Sunday, November 17, at 3 p.m. All four are studying advanced professional performance at the prestigious Colburn Conservatory in Los Angeles.

Over the past three years, musicians from the "Best of Colburn" concert have gone on to win major national and international competitions, including three Klein Grand Prizes for violin, a Naumberg Prize for cello, a Fischoff Grand Prize for string quartet and a coveted Davidson Laureate Fellowship. Violinist Francesca de Pasquale was recently handpicked by violin legend Itzhak Perlman to be his primary teaching assistant at Juilliard.

Eduardo Rios

This year's "Best of Colburn" features Peruvian violin phenomenon Eduardo Rios (current concertmaster of the American Youth Symphony), rising cello star Natalie Helm (who already has a European tour under her belt), poetically gifted pianist Eloise Kim (Vancouver Symphony Orchestra soloist), and the gregarious and enormously talented Gabriel Sears, who is taking the tuba into an exciting new realm as a solo instrument.

Natalie Helm

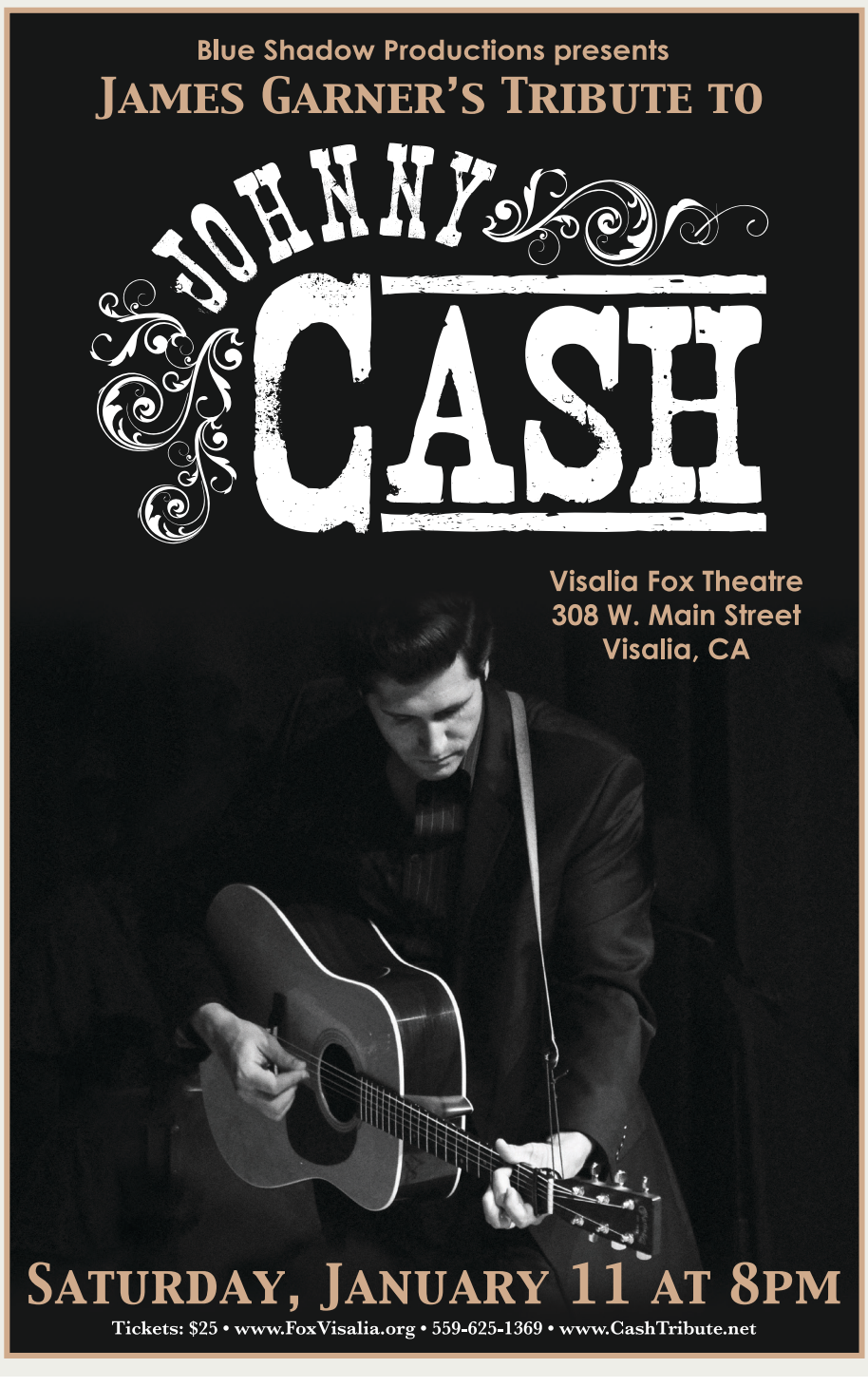
Gabriel Sears

The selections are audience-friendly and easily accessible, and include Liszt, Boccherini, Saint-Saëns' gorgeous "Swan," three riveting pieces for solo tuba and the passionate last movement of Mendelssohn's "Piano Trio in C Minor."

All students and children are admitted free, as are adults accompanying children. Tickets otherwise are just $12 and are available at the door and online at www.threeriversperformingarts.org.

Eloise Kim

Future concerts include: a one-man Walt Whitman show in December, violin virtuoso Danielle Belen in January, nationally acclaimed violinist and cellist Duo W in February, international prize winning Calidore String Quartet in March, and jazz in April.



Budweiser EVENT CALENDAR

MUSIC

November

Nov. 8-10 – Marriage of Figaro
Visalia Opera Company will present the Marriage of Figaro by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart at the Main Street Theater in Visalia. For information, visit visaliaoperacompany.org.

Nov. 9 – Joni Morris – 8pm
Joni Morris performs "Legendary Ladies" at the Hanford Fox Theatre, 326 N. Irwin Street, Hanford. Morris performs the songs of such legends as Patsy Cline, Connie Francis, Loretta Lynn, Tammy Wynette, Dolly Parton, Emmy Lou Harris, and other favorites. For information, visit foxhanford.com.

Nov. 10 – Meat Puppets – 7pm
Meat Puppets with The World Takes, featuring Bonebrake of X and Strangevine will perform an early show at the Cellar Door in Visalia. Tickets for the 21+ event are $10 in advance and $12 at the door. For information, visit www.snvfoundation.org.

Nov. 17 – COS Symphonic Band and Sequoias Winds – 4pm
The College of the Sequoia's Symphonic Band and Sequoias Winds will perform a concert in the College of Sequoia's Theater.

Nov. 20 – Obits – 9:30pm
Obits of Sub Pop Records will headline this 21+ show at the Cellar Door in downtown Visalia. Evelyn is also slated. For more information, visit www.snvfoundation.org.

Nov. 23 – Celebrate the Harvest – 7:30pm
Thanksgiving is no longer just the beginning of the Christmas season. Tulare County Symphony Orchestra puts the focus on the great American holiday with a choral festival featuring favorite folk songs and hymns, performed by a combined choir. For more information, visit tcsymphonyleague.org.

November 23 – TCSO Divine Divas – 7:30pm
International guest violinist, Haik Kazazyan, returns to the The Tulare County Symphony Orchestra to play music from "Carmen" and other opera classics at the Visalia Fox Theater. Ticket prices range from $20 to 39.50. For information, visit tularecountysymphony.com.

November 27 – Western Artist Juni Fisher – 7:30pm
The Lindsay Community Theater will host Western Artist Juni Fisher. Juni is nominated for five WMA Awards. For tickets, visit lindsaycommunitytheater.primetix.com.

December

Dec. 7 – College of the Sequoia's Choral Christmas Concert – 7:30pm
Tickets, $10, will be available at the door or by calling the COS Box Office at 730-3907.

December 9-12 – Annual Christmas Production
The Creative Center will present its Annual Christmas Production at the Jon Ginsburg Gallery Main Stage at 410 E. Race Avenue. For information, 733-9329.

Dec. 11 – Charlie Daniels Band – 7:30pm
No one can fiddle like the famed country music legend Charlie Daniels. The man responsible for "The South's Gonna Do it Again," "Long Haired Country Boy," and his signature song, "The Devil Went Down to Georgia," will appear at the Tachi Palace in Lemoore. Tickets go on sale on September 27, for $40, $60 and $85. For information, visit tachipalace.com.

Dec. 14 – Annual Holiday Concert – 3pm, 7:30pm
The Tulare County Symphony Orchestra's holiday concert includes more than 200 performers showcasing the talent through Tulare County. This popular holiday event will include two showings at 3pm and 7:30pm at the Visalia Fox Theater, 308 W Main Street, Visalia. For more information, visit tcsymphonyleague.org.

Dec. 16 – COS Music Department Finals Recital - 3 & 7pm
The College of the Sequoias Music Department will hold its Finals Recital at 3 and 7pm in the Sierra Music Building on the Visalia Campus.

January

Jan. 18 – Locals Night – 7:30pm
Tulare County Symphony Orchestra's very own musicians take their turns as resident artists in front of the orchestra at the Visalia Fox Theater, 308 W Main Street, Visalia. For more information, visit tcsymphonyleague.org.

January 18 – Celtic Rock with Tempest – 7:30pm
The Lindsay Community Theater will present Celtic Rock, a globally-renowned hybrid of high-energy Folk Rock fusing Irish reels, Scottish ballads, Norwegian influences and other world music elements. For tickets, visit lindsaycommunitytheater.primetix.com.

January 24-26, 31 & February 1,3, 7-9 – Respect, A Musical
Visalia Community Players will present "Respect, A Musical." For information visit visaliaplayers.org.

See more events online

ourvalleyvoice.com

EVENTS

November

November 7- The 8th Annual Cynthia Lockhart Mummery Conference
The Tulare County Child Abuse Prevention Council will hold a conference, "Shattered – From Tragedy to Triumph, Creating Trauma-Informed Communities," at the Visalia Holiday Inn. Materials and lunch are included in the $50 registration fee. Six continuing education units are available for an additional cost of $25. For information, call 735-0456.

November 7 – California Citrus Mutual Annual Meeting – 6pm
California Citrus Mutual Annual Meeting will include a no-host social hour, program and dinner at the Visalia Convention Center. Central Valley Congressman David Valadao will serve as the Keynote Speaker. Reservations are required. Contact the Citrus Mutual office, 592-3790.

November 7 – Que'n for Kids 5K Fund Run/Walk & Rib Cook Off – 6am
The 1st Annual Que'n for Kids 5K Fund Run/Walk will be held in downtown Lindsay. Following the race will be a rib cook off. A minimum $20 is requested. All proceeds to benefit Que'n for Kids. Registration begins at 6am with the race at 7am Categories include men and women ages 17 and under, runners 18-49, and 50+. The 3.1-mile route starts and finishes at the Ri Cook off site, on Honolulu Street North near Sweet Brier. For information, call Lionel 359-1739 or Marie 361-2715.

November 8 – Aquatini Shakedown – 6pm
California Water Alliance will host an evening of farming fellowship intertwined with martini mixology, Vintage Press cuisine, live music, gracious auctions and "water advocacy through unity." The event will be held at the Visalia Convention Center. Tickets, $75. For information contact, info@californiawateralliance.org.

November 9 – Health and Fitness Fair
The Lindsay Wellness Center is hosting this event featuring vendors selling items and providing free information and resources to provide a benefit to the health and well being of those in attendance. All vendor fees collected will be used to feed local shut-ins for the upcoming holiday season. Contact Marie Arroyo, 361-2715.

November 9 – Riverway Sports Park Grand Opening - 10am – 2pm
Riverway Sports Park's will celebrate its latest development with a dedication and ribbon-cutting. The development features a special events promenade, an arbor, playground, Saputo Sports Field and open grass area. The promenade will host the final show of the Concerts in the Park series with local band Willow Station. Riverway Sports Park is located at 3611 N. Dinuba Blvd. Visalia. The event is free. For information, visit liveandplayvisalia.com.

November 11 – Veterans Day Parade – 6pm
Lemoore will hold its annual Veterans Day Parade in downtown Lemoore. For information, contact the American Legion Post 100 at 707-4840.

November 11 - Candy Lane Parade Late Entry Deadline
The deadline to submit an entry into the 68th Annual Candy Cane Lane Parade will be accepted through November 11. For entry forms visit downtownvisalia.com.

November 12 – Hiring a Contractor – 6:30pm
A presentation by the California Department of Consumer Affairs, Contractor's State License Board will be held in the Visalia Library Blue Room. CSLB's representatives cover the subjects of home repair fraud and the importance of hiring licensed contractors. For more information, call 713-2703.

November 13 – Porterville Christmas Parade Entry Deadline
This is the deadline to submit entries for the Porterville's Annual Children's Christmas Parade to the Porterville Chamber of Commerce, 93 N. Main Street. This year's theme is "Christmas Dreams." Registration forms for parade participants and Porterville area non-profit food vendors are available at the chamber or by contacting info@portervillechamber.org.

November 13 – Annual Longevity Dinner – 5pm
The Tulare County Office of Education will celebrate employee service milestones at the Education Center, 2637 W. Burrel Ave., Visalia. For information, contact Jeanne Croson at jeannec@tcoe.org or 733-6322.

November 13 – California Concealed Carry Permit Training – 6-10pm
California Concealed Carry Permit Training, Eddie Reynoso, will offer class certification and NRA Basic Pistol classes. Classes for CCW certification renewal will be offered. Classes are $50 and held at Kirkman's VIP Pizza in Exeter (includes pizza and drink). For information call 679-8463.

November 16-17 – Holiday Marketplace Boutique
Central Valley W.O.M.E.N'S Network will host a Holiday Marketplace Boutique at the Visalia Convention Center. Tickets are $2. Current military and immediate family are free. For information, 731-4863 or visit centralvalleywomensnetwork.org.

November 14 & 16 – Veterans Aid and Attendance Benefits
If you or your spouse served our country during a period of war, you may be eligible for up to $2,054 tax-free money per month to help pay for home health care, assisted living or nursing home expenses. Gilbert Fleming, VA-accredited attorney, will be the guest speaker. For information or to RSVP, call 624-3503. Quail Park is located at 4520 W. Cypress Ave., Visalia.

November 16-17 – Holiday Marketplace Boutique 2013
Central Valley Women's Network will hold a boutique at the Visalia Convention Center. Admission is $2. Current members of the military and immediate family are free. For information, centralvalleywomensnetwork.org.

November 18-December 20 – Shop Corcoran for the Holidays
Beginning November 18 through December 20, shoppers collect all receipts from purchases made in Corcoran for a chance to win $500 in Corcoran Cash. Receipts are turned in to the Chamber. For every $100 spent, they receive a ticket. For information, 992-4514.

November 19 – Grow Business with Email Marketing – 10am-12pm
As part of its Business Development Series, Lemoore and Hanford Chambers of Commerce will host Michael Loschke, The Business Builder, who will talk on successfully integrating e-marketing into business. The event will be held at the Kings County Office of Education, Lemoore Conference Center, 876 E. "D" Street. For information, visit lemoorechamberofcommerce.com.

November 20 – Ribbon Cutting Flow Studios – 4:30-5:30pm
The Visalia Chamber of Commerce will welcome Flow Studios with a ribbon cutting at their downtown studio at 111 S. Court Street, Suite A. For information, visit visaliachamber.org.

November 21 – Annual Gift Faire – 5-7pm
The Creative Center's Annual Gift Faire: Soup, Sip and Shop will be held in the Jon Ginsburg Gallery, 410 E. Race Avenue. For information, call 733-9329.

November 26-January 4 – Santa Claus in Porterville! – 10am-4pm
Santa is coming to the Porterville Museum at 257 North D Street, Porterville. The museum is closed on Sundays. For more information, call 784-2053 or visit portervillemuseum.org.

December

December 2 – 68th Annual Candy Cane Lane Parade - 7-9pm
Downtown Visalia's 68th Annual Candy Cane Lane Parade will feature Laurie Isham, escorted by the Goshen Mounted Police, as the grand marshal. This year's theme is "The 12 Days for Christmas." For information, visit downtownvisalia.com.

December 5 – Porterville Christmas Parade – 7pm
Porterville's Annual Children's Christmas Parade kicks off the holiday season. The Rotary Club of Porterville, the City of Porterville, and the Porterville Chamber of Commerce have sponsored this community parade for over 50 years. For information, call the Porterville Chamber at 784-7502.

December 6 – Christmas Tree Auction
The 33rd Annual Christmas Tree Auction will feature a special "Giving Tree." The raffle winner will be able to select the charity of their choice as the recipient. The auction will be held at the Visalia Convention Center. For information, 734-5876. Tickets available at visaliachamber.org.

December 6 – Lindsay Chamber of Commerce Awards Nomination Deadline
The deadline to nominate businesses, organizations and community members for the Lindsay Chamber of Commerce Awards is December 6. The awards will be presented at the Chamber's Annual Awards Banquet on January 25 at McDermont Field House. For nomination forms and sponsorship information, visit thelindsaychamber.com.

December 7 – Spirit of the Holidays – 4-7pm
The 22nd Annual Spirit of the Holidays will feature wine tasting and a live Christmas tree auction at the Exeter Memorial Hall. Tickets, $50, are available at The Foothills, Sun-Gazette, The Bank of Sierra, Exeter Chamber, Nielsen & Associates Insurance, and from Kiwanis members.

December 7 – 2013 Lemoore Christmas Parade – 6pm
Christmas Around the World will be the theme of the annual Christmas parade in Lemoore. For information, 924-6401.

December 14-15 – It's a Model Railroad Christmas!– 6pm
The Visalia Electric Railroad Modelers and Historical Society will host this fun family activity at Sequoia Mall in Visalia, featuring model trains and all the details of many model train layouts, including several N Scale displays, the Club HO Scale display, and a sample of scenery under construction. There will be a raffle for a working HO Scale layout to start your own family hobby in model railroading. There is no charge. Hours: 10am – 8pm Saturday, 11am – 4pm Sunday. For more information, call 733-1196.

December 17 – Social Media Marketing Jump Start - 10am-12pm
As part of its Business Development Series, Lemoore and Hanford Chambers of Commerce will feature a presentation on Social Media Marketing. The event will be held at the Kings County Office of Education, Lemoore Conference Center, 876 E. "D" Street. For information, visit lemoorechamberofcommerce.com.

COMMUNITY

November

November 4-12 – Battle of the Badges Blood Drive
The 12th Annual South Valley Battle of the Badges Blood Drive is a friendly competition among Firefighters, Police, Forestry, Sheriff, Corrections, Fish & Game, Highway Patrol and other badge-carrying emergency personnel for bragging rights, and a perpetual trophy. This year's blood drive will take place at Central California Blood Centers in Visalia and Porterville. All donors will receive a commemorative 12th Annual South Valley Battle of the Badges T-shirt and a variety of donor reward coupons and surprises. For more information, call Rosie Dias, 737-6195, or Bob Brantley at 583-2600.

November 8 – Visalia City Employees Battle of the Badges Blood Drive – 8am-1:30 a.m
Local law enforcement agencies and emergency personnel compete to save lives through blood donations. The public is invited to donate in support and vote for their favorite badge carrying entity. The drive will be held at 707 E. Acequia Ave., Visalia. For information, call 389-5405.

November 8 – Farmersville P.D. and Tulare County Fire Department Battle of the Badges Blood Drive – 2-5pm
The drive will be held at 909 W. Visalia Rd. Farmersville. For information, call 389-5405.

November 8 – Dinuba Community Battle of the Badges Blood Drive – 2:30-6:30pm
The drive will be held at 900 W. El Monte Way, Dinuba. For information, call 389-5405.

November 8 – Woodlake Community, Woodlake Fire Department Battle of the Badges Blood Drive – 3:30-7pm
The drive will be held at 216 El Naranjo Blvd., Woodlake. For information, call 389-5405.

November 9 – Hanford Community Battle of the Badges Blood Drive – 11am – 4pm
The drive will be held at Hanford Mall, 1675 W. Lacey Blvd. For information, call 389-5405.

November 9 – Tulare County Fire Department - Pixley Battle of the Badges Blood Drive – 10am-2pm
The drive will be held at 200 N. Park Street, Pixley. For information, call 389-5405.

November 11 – Neighborhood Church Visalia Battle of the Badges Blood Drive – 8 a.m-12pm
The drive will be held at Neighborhood Church Visalia, 5505 West Riggin Ave. For information, call 389-5405.

November 11 – Exeter Community Battle of the Badges Blood Drive – 3-7pm
The drive will be held at A&W Root Beer, 420, N. Kaweah Ave., Exeter. For information, call 389-5405.

November 12 – Tulare Community, Senior Citizens Center Blood Drive – 3-7pm
The drive will be held at Tulare Community, Senior Citizens Center, 201 N. "F" Street, Tulare. For information, call 389-5405.

November 12 – City of Lemoore Battle of the Badges Blood Drive – 3-7pm
The drive will be held at Civic Auditorium, 435 "C" St., Lemoore. For information, call 389-5405.

November 14 – Memory Loss: Empowering the Community Through Early Detection – 2-3pm
A free workshop will be held at the Sequoia Cancer Center located at 4949 W. Cypress Ave., Visalia, in the Pauline and Maynard Faught Room. Quail Park Memory Care Residences is hosting the workshop which will cover topics of normal aging of the brain, early memory loss, warning signs of Alzheimer's and Dementia and mild cognitive impairment. For information, 624-3200.

November 14 – Prostate Health – 5:30-6:30pm
Wellness & You – Kaweah Delta Health Care District hosts a free seminar at Sequoia Regional Cancer Center, 4945 W. Cypress Ave. Speaker will be Marty Prah, MD. Information: 624-2463.

November 14 – Benefits of Exercise as a Lifestyle Choice – 6pm
Wellness talk: The Lifestyle Center hosts its free monthly wellness series at 5105 W. Cypress Ave. Topic: Benefits of Exercise as a Lifestyle Choice. Speaker: Roger D. Sebert, M.D., OB/GYN. Information: 624-3400.

November 18 – December 12 - Fat Burning 101 – 4:20-5:20pm
Porterville College Community will offer a non-credit course Mondays-Thursdays in the campus Fitness Center. Cost is $40 per person. This course is designed to teach members of the community to signal their body to burn fat; lose fat without losing muscle weight; do burst training exercise that melts fat off like butter; eat their way out of excess fat; achieve and maintain their healthiest body for life; analyze their ultrasound body composition; lower their risk for heart diseases, stroke and diabetes; and to prepare simple snacks, drinks, and meals for a healthy family. For more information on Community Education Classes, call 791-2492 or visit portervillecollege.edu/community_ed.

ART

November 7-January 4 – Tulare Historical Museum Exhibit
The Tulare Historical Museum presents works from the Main Gallery Artists. For information visit tularehistoricalmuseum.com.

November 13 – The Artwork of Glen Hill Exhibit Reception – 5-7pm
Porterville College Art Gallery will display the artwork of Glen Hill from Nov. 4–27. For information visit portervillecollege.edu.

November 16 – Three Rivers 28th Annual Holiday Arts and Crafts Bazaar
The Three Rivers Senior League will host the event at Three Rivers Memorial Building, 43490 Sierra Drive. Over 50 booths of handmade gifts, bake sale items, hot food and other items will be featured. For booth space call 561-3461.

November 16 – Downtown Lemoore 24th Annual Holiday Stroll – 3-8pm
The Downtown Lemoore Merchants Association will hold its Annual Holiday Stroll featuring unique gift ideas, holiday entertainment, festive decoration, and window decorating contest. Photos with Santa will be available from 4-6pm For information, 924-6401.

November 23 – Catholic Women's Guild Holiday Boutique & Craft Show – 9am-6pm
This annual Holiday Boutique/Craft Show will be held at St. Mary's Parish Hall, 506 N. Church St., Visalia. Santa Claus will be there from 1-4pm There will be a variety of vendors. For information, call Carol Yingst at 967-6067 or Irene Mosqueda at 740-8415.

Porterville College Gallery Welcomes Artwork of Glen Hill

The public is invited to see an exhibition of "The Artwork of Glen Hill" at the Porterville College Art Gallery through Nov. 27. The public is also invited to the artist's reception from 5-7pm on Nov. 13.

Glen Hill's exhibition of paintings and drawings reveals his love of portraiture and landscape infused with vivid color and light. Hill captures moments that reveal the human story in everyday events.

"Painting is one way to draw the viewer in, to reveal our common memories – to start the conversation," Hill said. "After all these years, I still can't wait for the next painting, and the one after that, because I'm always fascinated when someone looks at one of my pieces and says, 'Wow! That reminds me of...'"

Born in Chicago, Hill earned his bachelor's degree in Fine Arts from Art Center College of Design in Pasadena. After graduation, he immediately began working at Disney Animation Studios, and continued on to a successful 24-year career in film and television. When he wasn't animating, directing and producing such films as "The Fox and the Hound," "The Book of Virtues" (PBS), "The Life and Adventures of Santa Claus" (Universal), and "Family Guy" (Fox), Hill continued to illustrate for film, TV Guide and other magazines.

"I'm very thankful for a career in film and feel there is no greater school," said Hill. "What intrigues me, though, is that a single image tells a story that awakens the imagination. Life is not just a personal journey, it's a shared experience. The act of self-discovery is the most important work we can do."

In 2002, Hill sold his home in Santa Barbara, moved to Three Rivers, and opened his own gallery on Main Street in downtown Visalia. In 2010, Hill was invited to teach at West Hills College. In 2012, he also began teaching at Porterville College. Hill currently lives in Visalia, and is building a new painting and sculpture studio.

Gallery hours are Monday through Thursday from noon to 2pm, and 4 to 6pm. Parking is unrestricted during the time of the reception. For other times, contact the front desk for a free temporary parking permit.

Porterville College is located at 100 E. College Avenue in Porterville. For more information visit www.portervillecollege.edu.

'A Change of Mind' to be Performed at Lindsay Community Theater

GEORGE J. PEARCE

"A Change of Mind," a mystery drama, opens in the historic Lindsay Community Theater on November 15 at 7:30pm Encore performances will be November 16, 22 and 23.

Inspired by "The Twilight Zone" series of the '60s, "A Change of Mind" is the story of one man's choice between two very different realities. When John Smith's (Chris Shepard) plane crashes in the desert, he is rescued by a mysterious stranger, Mike (Thomas Crowe), who leads him to safety. When he returns home, he is torn between the reality of a life he detests and a very different reality with his new-found friend.

John, a moral man of wealth, is torn between these two realities. One reality is dominated by a demanding wife (Michelin White), a money-grubbing partner (Edgar Padilla), and a sympathetic psychiatrist (Ernest Medina) who fears for his patient's sanity. The other reality is centered on a mysterious stranger, Mike, who may or may not be real. Which life will he choose?

Jane (Michelin White) questions her ability to visit Spain as a frustrated John (Chris Sheppard) does his best to reassure her.

The cast is rounded out by John's spoiled daughter (Luz Scott), a desperately lonely son, who only wants to spend time with his dad, and an unscrupulous accountant (Ronnie Santana) willing to sell her soul for the right price.

The Lindsay Community Theater is located at 190 N. Elmwood in the heart of downtown Lindsay. Tickets are $10 for adults and $5 for students. Advance tickets are available online at lindsaycommunitytheater.com.

THEATER

November 10 – Moscow Ballet Great Russian Nutcracker – 8pm
The Moscow Ballet will be returning to the Hanford Fox this November. For information, visit foxhanford.com.

November 15-17 & November 21-23 – 'The Man Who Came to Dinner'
The College of the Sequoias Theatre Department will present "The Man Who Came to Dinner." The shows begin at 7:30pm, with two matinee performances scheduled on November 17 and November 23 at 2pm Tickets are $12, $10 for students and seniors. For tickets, call 730-3907. For information, visit costheatre.org

November 15, 16, 22 and 23 – 'A Change of Mind' – 7:30pm
This special theater event is written and directed by George Pearce about a man stranded in the desert who finds salvation from a stranger named Mike. Admission is free. Donations welcomed. The Lindsay Community Theater is located at 190 N. Elmwood, Lindsay. For information, visit lindsaycommunitytheater.com.

November 21 – Independent Film Movement Series – 'Three Worlds' – 6pm
This month's selection is "Three Worlds." Al, a young man from a modest background, is ten days away from marrying the daughter of his boss, along with succeeding him as the head of the car dealership. One night, while coming back drunk from his bachelor party, Al commits a hit-and-run when he hits a man by accident. What he does not know is that the entire accident was witnessed from a balcony by a young woman, Juliette, who is going through her own emotional upheavals. French & Moldovan with English subtitles. 101 minutes. Location: Visalia Library Blue Room. For more information, call 713-2703.

November 21-23 – 'Oklahoma!'
The Tulare County Office of Education Theatre Company Fall Musical will be Rogers and Hammerstein's "Oklahoma!" The musical production features some of the best young talent in the county. The show will be open for three days at the L.J. Williams Theater, 1001 Main St., Visalia. For information, contact Brian Roberts at brianr@tcoe.org or call 651-1482.

November 22-24 – 'Love, Loss, and What I Wore'
"Love, Loss, and What I Wore," a series of vignettes about the nostalgic power of women's clothes, will be presented by The Visalia Players at The Ice House Theatre, located at the corner of Race and Santa Fe in Visalia. Evening performances are at 7:30pm on November 22-23 and a matinee will be at 2pm on November 24. For information, visit visaliaplayers.org.

November 29-30 and December 1 – 'Love, Loss, and What I Wore'
See November 22-24 listing.

'Catching Fire' Returns Readers to the Land of Hunger Games

HANNAH GREEN

"… Already long ago, from when we sold our vote to no man, the People have abdicated our duties; for the People who once upon a time handed out military command, high civil office, legions — everything, now restrains itself and anxiously hopes for just two things: bread and circuses."
-Juvenal

Catching Fire, by Suzanne Collins, is the second book of a trilogy of novels that brings us into the country of Panem via the protagonist and narrator, Katniss Everdeen. Collins constructs a dystopian world in which panem et circenses—bread and circuses—dominate a nation of political and social oppression.

Panem is comprised of two citizenries, the Capitol citizens and the District citizens. Twelve districts provide the Capitol with every imaginable luxury, each district assigned the production that works best with its geographic location: for example, District Eleven, located somewhere in the southern region of what used to be North America, is dedicated to agriculture, which is shipped en masse to the Capitol to become delicacies and shipped as a pittance to the Districts, where the most common cause of death likely is starvation. District Twelve, in the mountains formerly known as Appalachian, mines coal that fuels the faulty electricity in the Districts and the flawlessly uninterrupted electricity of the Capitol. Every year, each District must hold a lottery to determine two tributaries between the ages of 12 and 18 to be sent to a giant arena, in which the children will spend two weeks fighting to the death until only one Victor remains. This tradition is called the Hunger Games (the title of the first book of the trilogy), and its public intent is to remind the Districts that rebellion will only end in bloodshed for them, and that conserving the status quo is preferable for all citizens. Its secondary intent is also to serve as a form of entertainment for the Capitol citizens, as a circus for the wealthy. It is within the disparities between the Capitol and the Districts that Collins works to argue against the social ills of the day: the Districts are forced to provide bread—their assigned productions that are sent to the Capitol—and circuses—the Hunger Games, to keep the Capitol people compliant and complacent.

Collins uses Panem as a dystopian alternative to our current Western world. It is a gross distortion used to criticize some of the political and social practices many Western nations employ. In Panem, the citizens are disinterested and uninformed of the way in which the political system works, and none of the citizens seem concerned about dissecting the semantics of their own government, much less participating in the political process. The District citizens have limited education until the age of 18, when everybody is sent into their designated workforce; as for the Capitol citizens, the reader never learns if education is mandatory or even available, and the citizens fill their time following the latest amusements and attempting to enhance their own performances in the social arena through fashions and epicurean pastimes. They have absolved themselves of their civic duty in lieu of a life of luxury.

Socially, the citizens of Panem's Capitol, who represent the wealthy class, are obsessed with being constantly connected to media and entertainment (which is not to say connected with one another). This mimics the connectivity in the nonfiction world that has arisen in recent decades and the subsequent constant online, accessible presence that many people feel the need to employ. In Panem, this connectivity serves as a distraction from civic duties and as a way for the government to put in place constant oversight and surveillance, as the citizens see surveillance as a natural consequence of living in a constantly connected world. In the Capitol, citizens opt into this connectivity via media and entertainment; in the Districts, citizens understand that cameras, omnipresent law enforcement, and strict physical boundaries put them under this surveillance.

Suzanne Collins

Collins argues that this political system of bread and circuses undermines the security of the people. By providing basic needs (although the wealth disparity is still dangerous to the well-being of the Districts) and constant entertainment, the government sufficiently distracts its citizens from the political processes and thus the carrying, transference and enactment of power. This works against both the privileged and the unprivileged. In the Capitol, citizens lack true freedom because they have no say in the political system, which holds true even though they appear uninterested in politics. In the Districts, citizens lack true freedom in more tangible ways: they cannot choose to support themselves in ways other than those approved by the Capitol, which restricts their working and operating power and thus their access to basic needs; they cannot travel outside of their district; finally, citizens of the Districts have no legal recourse against any transgression the government might commit against them. Both zones of the country are under constant surveillance, and the citizens accept this as a natural consequence of living in a constantly connected world.

If Collins' symbolism for these topics is heavy at times, it is appropriate for the genre and intended audience of the novels. It also works on a literary level: throughout the novel, the rulers of Panem are ham-fisted in their symbolic and substantial control over their citizens, which the writing style reflects. Each Hunger Games is a symbol of the Capitol's power, each tribute a reminder of the powerlessness of the Districts; even the country's name—Panem—is representative of a larger, conspicuous conspiracy. In this way, the Capitol hands the Districts over to the first larger-than-life symbol they've ever had outside of the Capitol's sanctioned symbols, as the Capitol has primed the citizens to think in sound bites, grand gestures and entertainment. Katniss is a symbol of both the Districts (the rebels) and the Capitol (those who uphold the status quo) as the Mockingjay. She provides the perfect sound bite of hope, the grand gesture of revolution and an entertainment that enthralls and distracts the Capitol citizens, which prevents them from seeing Katniss as anything other than an interest piece, let alone see her as a threat to their current standard of living and way of life.

Even with Collins' pertinent writing style, gripping plot and profound parallels with Panem to our own world, Catching Fire works best as a second book in a trilogy, leading up to Mockingjay. Catching Fire was never meant to stand on its own. In fact, Collins' refusal to advocate for a concrete alternative to the government currently in place in Panem leads the reader through the initial phases of this rebellion, where the reader only knows that this government is unjust, and that the rebels will make it unsustainable. Neither rebels nor readers know what system to prop up in place of the totalitarian regime of the Capitol, and so all we have within Catching Fire is the beginnings of the dismantling. We can only see if Mockingjay builds something new.

Auction

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Enchanted Evening, Golden State Family Services, Habitat for Humanity of Tulare County, Hospice of Tulare County, Hospice of Tulare County Foundation, ImagineU Children's Museum, Jeff Barnes Brain Injury Foundation, Kaweah Delta Foundation Lifeline, Love in the Name of Christ, Mt. Whitney High School Pioneer Marching Band, National Alliance on Mental Illness, Redwood High School ASB, Sequoia Breast Center/Kaweah Delta Foundation, St. Paul's Schools Parent Guild, Tulare County Symphony Association, Tulare County Symphony League, United Way of Tulare County, Visalia Education Foundation, Visalia Emergency Aid, Visalia Emergency Aid-FoodLink for Tulare County, Visalia Rescue Mission, Visalia YMCA, Vision Visalia, and YoungLives of Tulare County.

This year, the chamber announced a new Community Giving Tree sponsored by Groppetti Automotive. During the evening, attendees will have the chance to purchase tickets to win the Giving Tree. At the end of the evening, one ticket will be chosen and the winning individual will have the opportunity to donate all of the proceeds from the Giving Tree to a local charity of their choosing.

Special sponsorship opportunities are still available for interested businesses. (Call the chamber for details.) To purchase tickets, visit the Visalia Chamber of Commerce, 220 N. Santa Fe Street, Visalia, call 734-5876 or visit www.visaliachamber.org.

RECYCLE THIS PAPER
OR BE WRONG

Leopold and His Fiction Brings Raw Sound to Cellar Door

Naked, stripped-down and aching with adrenaline is the rawness of Leopold and his Fiction, which will headline a 7 p.m. show at The Cellar Door in downtown Visalia on Friday, November 15.

Daniel James of Leopold and His Fiction

A revolving group of friends led by Daniel James (lead vocal/guitar), the band's makeup sprouted from collaborations made on the road in the whirlwind cycle of touring. From San Francisco to L.A. to Austin, various musical adventures had come and gone, until James found a common vision in the musicians he'd met along the way.

Originally formed as an outlet for James to exercise virtues gained from years living in Detroit, the band absorbed pieces of the Motown catalog along with the protopunk resonance of Iggy's Stooges and molded these sounds into a personal version of the rock 'n' roll dream. It's as if they are connected directly into an electrical outlet.

"The band elicits a power when it's time to perform that is unable to be harnessed in any other medium short of a fistfight," says James. "Whether that's on stage or in a recording studio, it's almost hard to contain it. "

It was that sonic fever that landed the group recent support slots for The Cult and ZZ Top.

For the past year, Leopold and his Fiction have been working with Grammy-nominated producer Chris "Frenchie" Smith (The Datsuns, Slayer, Jet, The Dandy Warhols) in recording and capturing a musical journey that is as relentless as it is inspiring. Expect to be hearing a lot from them in the near future.

Kicking off the night will be Central Valley punk-folk favorites Tyrannosaurus Zebra. Tickets for the 21+ show are $7, and available at ticketweb.com.

Museum Honors Croatian Experiences

"Diligence Grown from Strong Roots: Honoring Croatian Experiences in Tulare County" is the current exhibition at the History of Tulare County Farm Labor & Agriculture Museum, located inside Mooney Grove Park in Visalia.

The museum has collaborated with members of the local Croatian community to create a display that tells the story of the influence that this community has had on Tulare County.

Photographs and artifacts from local Croatian families showcase Croatian culture, which includes widespread participation in the table grape industry, musical instruments and strong family ties.

Admission to the park and museum is free.

'Dawn of the Space Age' at Peña Planetarium

The Sam B. Peña Planetarium, operated by the Tulare County Office of Education, will present a 7 p.m. showing of "Dawn of the Space Age" on Friday, November 15.

From the launch of the first artificial satellite, Sputnik, to the magnificent lunar landings and privately operated space flights, this show presents a historic reconstruction of man's first steps into space.

The planetarium is located at 2500 W. Burrel Ave. (in the Educational Enrichment Center on the southwest corner of West Main Street and Woodland Drive) in Visalia. Tickets are available at the planetarium office only between noon and 7 p.m. on the day of the show. Tickets are $4 for adults and $3 for children under 12. No late seating is offered once the planetarium doors close.

For more information, call 737-6334 or visit www.tcoe.org/planetarium.

Symphony

Continued from p. 17

The baritone soloist is Limuel Forgey, well known in the area for his many singing roles. He will play Figaro in "The Marriage of Figaro" with the Visalia Opera Company November 8-10, and performs with the Fresno Grand Opera and the Broadway touring production of "Les Miserables," where he is the understudy for the part of Javert.

Tenor Zachary Sheely is part of his family farming operation in Lemoore and has sung leading roles with the California Opera, including B.F. Pinkerton in "Madame Butterfly."

Rounding out the soloists will be two sopranos from the California Opera Association.

Tickets for the 7pm concert are $30 to $39.50, and are available at the symphony office. Student tickets are $10. Tickets are also available by calling 732-8600 or visiting www.tcsymphony.org.

Lovett/Hiatt

Continued from p. 17

Walk of Fame, received the Americana Music Association's Lifetime Achievement Award for Songwriting, was inducted into the Nashville Songwriters Hall of Fame, and was named Best Male Vocalist in Rolling Stone's annual Critics Poll, all thanks to his patented rootsy rock/country/blues fusion.

Tickets are $44, $64 and $74. Call 584-7823 or visit www.foxhanford.com for tickets or more information.

Meat Puppets

Continued from p. 17

legal problems band members have had over the years are "in the past. We're pretty normal these days. It's been a while since we had any problems."

When asked where the Meat Puppets will be in five years, Kirkwood paused. "I don't really look down the road that far," he said. "We're doing 23 shows between now and the end of the year. That's enough to boggle my mind."

The Meat Puppets shows at intimate clubs, such as The Cellar Door in Visalia, don't differ much from their performances in front of large audiences, according to Kirkwood. "I think if the stage is bigger and we don't bump into stuff, we might jump around more," he said.

The band plans to change their song lineup between shows on their current tour. "We'll do something from the new album ("Rat Farm") and across the board," Kirkwood said.

Also performing at the November 10 show, the Meat Puppets' first performance in Visalia, will be The World Takes (featuring Bonebrake of X) and Strange Vine.

Tickets for the 21+ show are $10 in advance, $12 at the door. For more information, visit snvfoundation.org.